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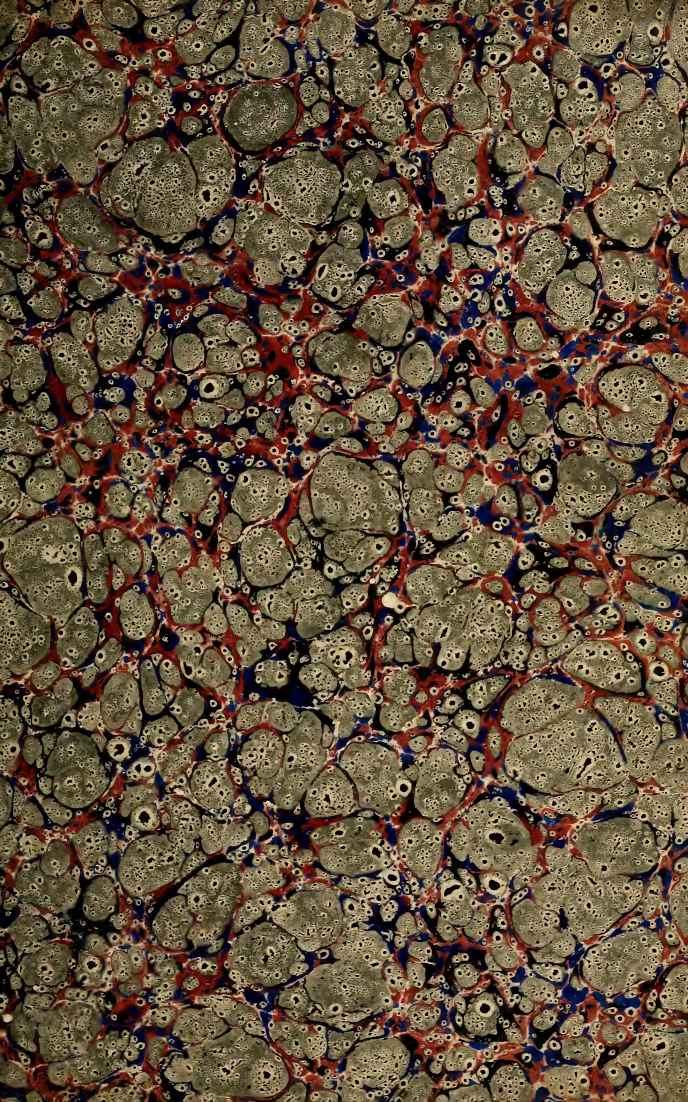
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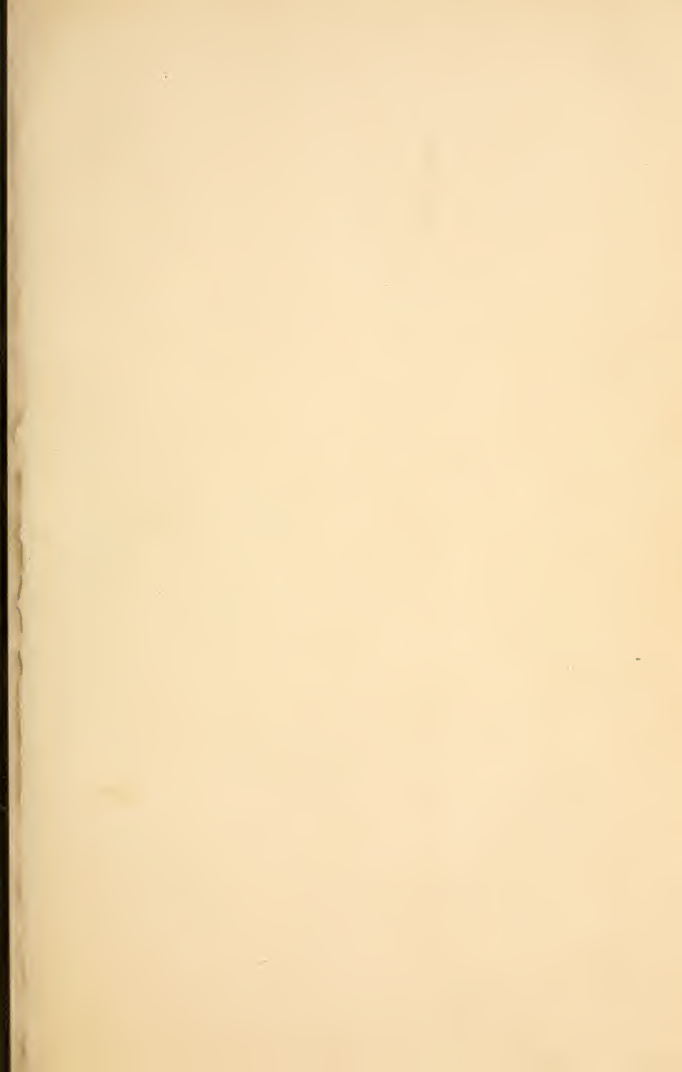
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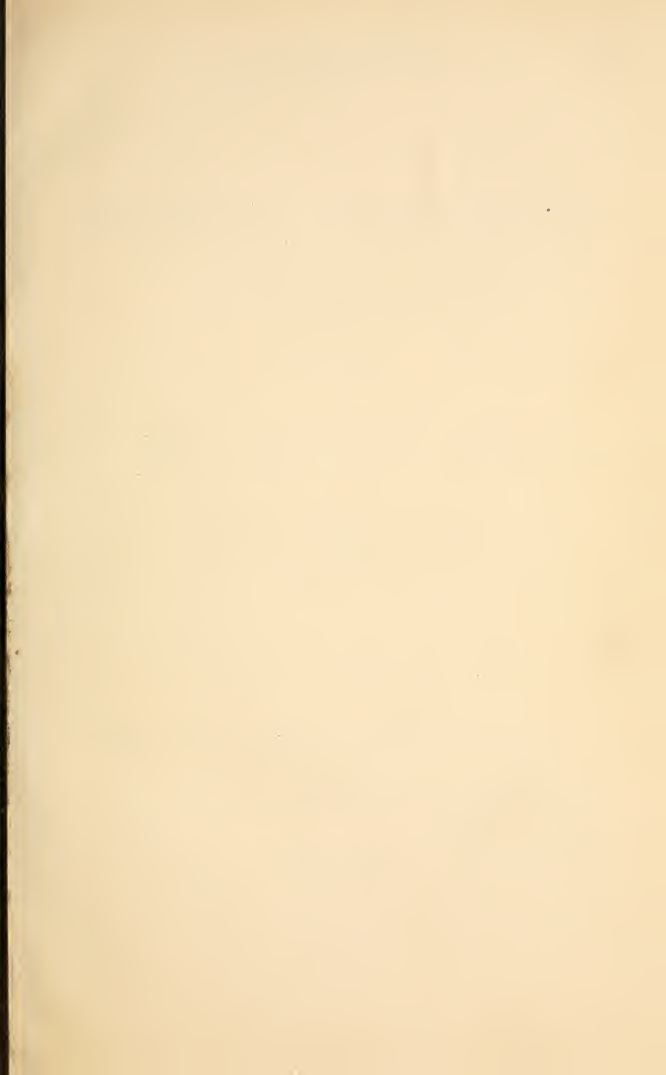
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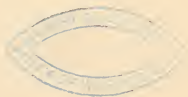
OR,

Hints on the Application of Logic.

BY G. J. HOLYOAKE,  
AUTHOR OF "MATHEMATICS NO MYSTERY," "LOGIC OF  
FACTS," ETC.

"Common sense is the genius of humanity."—*Gutzot*.

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# CONTENTS.

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## PROEM.

### PART I.—DERIVATIVE POWERS.

Chap. I. Rhetoric.	Chap. IV. Method.
Chap. II. Delivery.	Chap. V. Discipline.
Chap. III. Persuasion.	Chap. VI. Tact.

### PART II.—ACQUIRED POWERS.

Chap. VII. Originality.	Chap. XIII. Energy.
Chap. VIII. Heroism.	Chap. XIV. Eloquence.
Chap. IX. Proportion.	Chap. XV. Premeditation.
Chap. X. Style.	Chap. XVI. Reality.
Chap. XI. Similes.	Chap. XVII. Effectiveness.
Chap. XII. Plesantry.	Chap. XVIII. Mastery.

### PART III.—APPLIED POWERS.

Chap. XIX. Criticism.	Chap. XXII. Questioning.
Chap. XX. Debate.	Chap. XXIII. Repetition.
Chap. XXI. Personalities.	Chap. XXIV. Poetry.



## PROEM.

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THE highest truths of transcendental metaphysics will one day reach the populace. Not only the standard of intellect, but that of morality, will be raised. The race of the Papinians, the Cromwells, and Marvels, will be multiplied. It was once said all could not learn to read, write, and account. Now they do learn these and other things. They will one day learn all things. Intellect will conquer all obstacles, and teach the human race to realise untold perfection.

But it will be accomplished piecemeal. Progression is a series of stages. Individuals first, then groups, then classes, then nations, are raised. You can no more introduce, at once, the multitude to the highest results of philosophy, than you can take a man to the summit of a monument without ascending the steps, or reach a distant land without travelling the journey. This book is a stage. As the preceding ones in this series, it is designed for the class of young thinkers to whom knowledge has given some intellectual aspiration, and fate denied the means of its scholastic gratification. It is therefore neither elementary nor ultimate, but a medium between the two. It addresses itself to a want. It deals in results. It dictates doing.

Spontaneous life is the life of the people. Their knowledge is confined to phenomena. Their *practical* philosophy is the reality of Hobbism. Disguise it as we may, their sensation is suffering, their reflection, revenge—their sole business, the betterance of their condition. All you can do is to guide their rude interpretation of nature, men, and manners—to give plain method to their classification, coherence to their inferences, justice to their invectives. They want no new philosophy. There are more old ones which are good than they can study. There is more wisdom extant than they can master, more precepts than they can apply. Weapons innumerable surround them, of which they have to be taught the use. Their watchword is *work*. The scaling-ladders of the wise, which they, having mounted the citadel of wisdom, have kicked down, are yet of service to those who are below. I have picked a few of these ladders up, and reared them in these pages for the use of those who have yet to rise.

Fastidious punctilios of scholarship would be out of place in such a book as this. He who addresses the artisan class, must, like the Spartans, write to be read, and speak to be understood. Mechanics and Literary Institutions cannot *cultivate* their frequenters, and those greatly mistake the requirements of learning and the state of the people who think they can. They can *stimulate* improvement, and this is their province. Nations never become civilised and learned till subsistence is secure and leisure abundant. So of individuals. The populace are still engaged in the lowest battle of animal wants—and even the middle classes are in the warfare of intellectual wants. In the ancient state of society war was the only trade, force the only teacher, and the battle-axe the only argument. A transition has indeed taken place—the time, and means, and ends are changed—but not the relative position of men. No more do we struggle for the victory of conquest, but we struggle for wages and more intelligence. Knowledge has reached the mass so as to make them sensible of their ignorance without diminishing their privations, and they are now engaged in a double battle against Want and Error. The struggle, therefore, is resolute. The training wanted is practical—the weapons serviceable and ready for use. Provided the literary sword will cut, few will quarrel about the polish. If the blade has good temper, he who needs it will put up with a plain hilt.

When I contemplate the appliances which learning and science present to the scholar, and see how multiplied are his means of knowing the truth upon all subjects, I cannot conceive that he can be struggling like the untaught thinker between right and wrong. To the scholar, truth and falsehood must be apparent; and since the learned do not penetrate to the intellect of the populace, and establish intelligence among them, it must be that the learned want courage or condescension, or that common sense among them is petrified in formulas. We want either a hammer or a fire to break the spell or dissolve the ice.

Those words of Guizot which I have placed on the title-page, indicate the broad obviousness of precept aimed at in this work. Hudibras tells us that—

All the logician's rules  
Teach nothing but to name their tools.

I have attempted to recast this order. In the "Logic of Facts" I have dealt with the *materials* of reasoning. This is such "Application" of them as I should make. In this matter I have striven to speak without affecting superiority or infallibility. Writer and reader stand on the same level—and from a common ground thus established, mutual inquiry starts. The information attempted is essentially practical. It is not the heavy inexorable theory of the last age applied to the bustle and elasticity of this; but upon the learning of the schools is endeavoured to be engrafted the learning of life, the literature of the streets and of trade, the logic of the newspaper and the platform, and the rhetoric of daily conversation—that the reader may acquire a public as well as a scholastic spirit: the aim being to elicit origi-

nality, to realise a *distinct* individual, who shall go forth into the arena of the world with determinate and disciplined powers capable of usefully influencing its affairs.

In the division of the Parts and the succession of the Chapters there is no pretension to scientific classification. The distinction drawn between the Parts, though not recognised, will, I believe, be found practically suggestive. The order of the Chapters is that which seemed to me to be natural, at least to throw light, one upon the subject of the other. In "Hints" a greater licence is allowed, and strict sequence is not so much looked for as suggestiveness.

The FIRST PART treats of the Rudiments of Rhetoric, the elements which the student derives from the instruction of others. After the "Proem" has informed the reader of the design of the book, "Rhetoric" defines and explains the subject;—"Delivery" commences with the laws of tone, founded on the study of feeling. "The Theory of Persuasion" accumulates materials from the study of manifestation—"Method" teaches how to use these materials with power—"Discipline" teaches how this power is confirmed—"Tact" teaches its special application.

The SECOND PART includes those topics, a knowledge of which is not so much, or, rather, not so well, derived from the instruction of others, as acquired by the personal observations of the student. Doubtless the teacher can impart them, but only in a qualified sense. The student will never excel, unless he trust to himself and to his independent exertions. The practical relation between the subjects in this Part, seem to be this,—"Originality" is a source of independent power—"Heroism" its manifestation—"Proportion" prunes "Heroism" of Exaggeration and Declaration—"Style" indicates individuality of expression—"Similes" offer themselves as weapons of expression—"Pleasantry" its relief—"Energy" is a species of lemma to Eloquence—"Eloquence" marshals the powers to effect conviction on a given point—"Premeditation" teaches how effect is to be provided for—"Reality" infuses confidence—"Effectiveness" sums up the condition of complete impression—"Mastery" denotes the signs of rhetorical perfection.

The THIRD PART, again, relates in its distinction rather to the student than to the subject intrinsically considered. This Part treats of topics in which the student finds the application of previous acquisitions. "Criticism," applies preceding topics to the development of beauties and correction of faults—"Debate" is tact applied to conversion—"Questioning," or Socratic Disputation, is the auxiliary of Debate—"Personalities" treat of the conduct of Controversy—"Repetition" is the philosophy of Reformation—"Poetry" is the highest result of Rhetoric.

Whosever well-expressed thought I have found which illustrated my subject, I have taken, and, what is somewhat more unusual, I have acknowledged it: because the author of a useful idea ought to be remembered as one who leaves a legacy. Through this punctillousness the critics will say that I have not composed, but that

I have compiled a book. Though I see books published around me, in which there is more that belongs to others than in this book—but the obligations being concealed—the ostensible authors get the credit of being original. We are all of us indebted to those who have thought before us, and we have to say with Montaigne—“I have gathered a nosegay of flowers in which there is nothing of my own but the string which ties them.” But in this case the string which ties them is my own. The architect (to pass from nature to art) has the credit of his conception and erection of an edifice. Yet he does not *create* the materials. The materials he finds, but he gives them proportion, place, and design. The *idea* is his; and if good, we credit him with distinct merit. Why, therefore, should not the author of a book, even if made up of other men's materials, be credited also with distinct merit, if his work has an idea which subordinates the materials he employs and shapes them to a new utility?

G. J. H.



# PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE.

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## PART I.

### DERIVATIVE POWERS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### RHETORIC.

RHETORIC is the application of Logic to mankind. By reasoning we satisfy ourselves, by rhetoric we satisfy others. The rhetorician is commonly considered most perfect who *carries his point* by whatever means. Men like to see the man who is a match for events, and equal to any exigency. But it is plain we must make some distinction as to the manner in which a point is to be carried. We may as well say that a man may carry the point of life, that is, fill his pockets by any means, as influence men by any means. A low appeal to the passions we call claptrap. I know no better definition of rhetoric than Dr. Johnson's definition of oratory. "Oratory," said the Dr., "is the power of beating down your adversaries' arguments, and putting *better* in their places."

Descending more into detail, the description given by Lord Herbert of Cherbury is the happiest and healthiest delineation of rhetoric that has fallen under my notice.

"It would be fit that some time be spent in learning rhe-

toric or oratory, to the intent that upon all occasions you may express yourself with eloquence and grace ; for, as it is not enough for a man to have a diamond unless it is polished and cut out into its due angles, so it will not be sufficient for a man to have a great understanding in all matters, unless the said understanding be not only polished and clear, but under-set and holpen a little with those figures, tropes, and colours which rhetoric affords, where there is use of persuasion. I can by no means yet commend an affected eloquence, there being nothing so pedantical, or indeed that would give more suspicion that the truth is not intended, than to use overmuch the common forms prescribed in schools. It is well said by them, that there are two parts of eloquence necessary and recommendable ; one is, to speak hard things plainly, so that when a knotty or intricate business, having no method or coherence in its parts, shall be presented, it will be a singular part of oratory to take those parts asunder, set them together aptly, and so exhibit them to the understanding. And this part of rhetoric I much commend to everybody ; there being no true use of speech but to make things clear, perspicuous, and manifest, which otherwise would be perplexed, doubtful, and obscure.

“The other part of oratory is to speak common things ingeniously or wittily ; there being no little vigour and force added to words, when they are delivered in a neat and fine way, and somewhat out of the ordinary road, common and dull language relishing more of the clown than the gentleman. But herein also affectation must be avoided ; it being better for a man by a native and clear eloquence to express himself, than by those words which may smell either of the lamp or inkhorn ; so that, in general, one may observe, that men who fortify and uphold their speeches with strong and evident reasons, have ever operated more on the minds of the auditors than those who have made rhetorical excursions. Aristotle hath written a book of rhetoric, a work in my opinion not

inferior to his best pieces, whom therefore with Cicero de Oratore, as also Quintilian, you may read for your instruction how to speak ; neither of which two yet I can think so exact in their orations, but that a middle style will be of more efficacy, Cicero in my opinion being too long and tedious, Quintilian too short and concise.”

“ Between grammar, logic, and rhetoric, there exists a close and happy connexion, which reigns through all science, and extends to all the powers of eloquence.

“ Grammar traces the operations of thought in known and received characters, and enables polished nations amply to confer on posterity the pleasures of intellect, the improvements of science, and the history of the world.

“ Logic converses with ideas, adjusts them with propriety and truth, and gives the whole an elevation in the mind consonant to the order of nature or the flight of fancy.

“ Rhetoric, lending a spontaneous aid to the defects of language, applies her warm and glowing tints to the portrait, and exhibits the grandeur of the universe, the productions of genius, and all the works of art, as copies of the fair original.”\*

He who gives directions for the attainment of oratory is supposed, if a public speaker, to be capable of illustrating his own precepts.

“ He may be thought to challenge criticism ; and his own performances may be condemned by a reference to his own precepts ; or, on the other hand, his precepts may be undervalued, through his own failures in their application. Should this take place in the present instance, I have only to urge, with Horace in his Art of Poetry, that a whetstone, though itself incapable of cutting, is yet useful in sharpening steel. No system of instruction will completely equalise natural powers : and yet it may be of service towards their improvement. The youthful Achilles acquired skill in hurling the

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\* *Spectator*, No. 421.

javelin under the instruction of Chiron, though the master could not compete with the pupil in vigour of arm.\*

But there is little danger, in these days, of any serious judgment being passed upon the indifferent exemplar of the rhetorical maxims he lays down. Our orators escape as our statues do. Good public monuments are so scarce that the people are no judges of art, and great speakers so seldom arise that the people are no judges of oratory. England has not reached the age of excellence in this respect. Great events can excite it, but only a national refinement, including opulence and a liberal philosophy, can sustain it. The power of oratory requires the union of intellect, leisure and health, discipline of thought, accuracy of expression, method, a manly spirit, an absolute taste, copiousness of information upon the given subject, and concentration. Oratory—by which term I always mean the highest efforts in the art of public persuasion—might exist in the church but for its dread of imitating the theatre. It is suppressed among the dissenters by the influence of evangelism. Did this not exist, their precarious pay would deter them from the pursuit of the art. The bar is too full of business and too anxious for fees, to reach much distinction where leisure and choice are necessary. The politician is generally indolent if not dependent, and if necessitous he has to struggle for himself when he should be struggling for excellence. Besides these drawbacks, there are various popular prejudices which few minds are strong enough to withstand, and which deter the young aspirant after eloquence. Under various heads, as “Premeditation,” “Discipline,” and others, these points of prejudice will be discussed.

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\* Whately's Rhetoric, preface.

## CHAPTER II.

## DELIVERY.

“ELOCUTION,” says Walker, “in the modern sense of the word, seems to signify that pronunciation which is given to words when they are arranged into sentences, and form discourse.” The power of distinct and forcible pronunciation is the basis of delivery. Between deliberate, full-toned, and energetic speaking, and feeble, indistinct, and spiritless utterance, there is the difference of live and dead oratory.

The rudiments of speaking are few and simple. Vowels should have a bold, round, mellow tone. This is the *basis* of speaking. A slight, short, mincing pronunciation of the accented vowels is the prime fault to be avoided. There is scarcely anything more distinguishes a person of a mean, from one of a good education, than the pronunciation of the unaccented vowels.

Audibility depends chiefly on articulation, and articulation depends much on the distinctness with which we hear the final consonants.

R has two sounds, a rough and a smooth one. The rough *r* is proper at the beginning of words, and the smooth *r* at the end of words, or when succeeded by a consonant. The audibility of the *r* in each case gives strength to the utterance.

In about twenty-two words in our language, beginning with *h*, the *h* is not sounded. These words must be carefully attended to, and all other words beginning with *h* must have that letter distinctly heard. In illustration of this neglect of aspiration where proper, teachers of elocution are accustomed to say, that if the Indian swallows the sword we (*h*)eat the poker.

A strong delivery is to be constantly cultivated—that is, an energy that shall prevent drawling and a slowness that shall avoid mumbling words or chopping half the sounds away, as hasty speaking does. Take time to fully articulate and intonate. Speak “trippingly” without tripping. If you must be extreme, better be solemn than hasty.

Robert Hall, whose talent for extempore speaking was such that, when eleven years of age, he was set up to preach extempore to a select auditory of full-grown men, says of himself, “To me to speak slow was ruin. You know, sir, that force or momentum is conjointly as the body and the velocity; therefore, as my voice is feeble, what is wanted in body must be made up in velocity.” This is a mathematical figure of speech, and is more true of Dynamics than Rhetoric. This remark has seriously misled many young speakers. There is a distinction to be noted between a small voice arising from peculiarity in the conformation of the larynx, and the feeble voice which arises from the narrow chest or from physical debility. Unless there is great strength to support any momentum imparted, indistinctness and alternations of screechings and whispers will be the inevitable results.

At a Corn-law meeting held in Glasgow, in 1845, I sat at half distance from the platform. Having offered my services to the Lord Provost, I was uncertain whether I should not be required to take part in the proceedings. I was, therefore, anxious to hear all that was said. It was at this time that I first felt perfectly the annoyance of indistinct speaking. At the Newhall Hill meetings in Birmingham I had been accustomed to hear the Warwickshire orators *roar*, but in Glasgow I found they only spoke, and spoke as though they were paid for the sound they made, and did not get a good price for it. At length the Rev. Dr. King arose, who spoke with strong deliberateness. His speech was ably conceived, and wisely delivered. Every word fell on the ear like the steady tolling of a bell. His voice was the anodyne of the night. When-

ever I go to a public meeting I pray that one Dr. King may be present.

It is said of Mr. Macaulay (I think by Francis in his "Orators of the Age") that when an opening is made in a discussion in the House of Commons, he rises, or rather darts up from his seat, and plunges at once into the very heart of his subject, without exordium or apologetic preface. In fact, you have for a few seconds a voice pitched in alto, monotonous, and rather shrill, pouring forth words with inconceivable velocity, ere you have become aware that a new speaker, and one of no common order, has broken in upon the debate. A few seconds more, and cheers, perhaps from all parts of the house, rouse you completely from your apathy, compelling you to follow that extremely voluble and not very enticing voice, in its rapid course through the subject on which the speaker is entering, with a resolute determination, as it seems, never to pause. You think of an express train, which does not stop even at the chief stations. On, on he speeds, in full reliance on his own momentum, never stopping for words, never stopping for thoughts, never halting for an instant, even to take breath, his intellect gathering new vigour as it proceeds, hauling the subject after him, and all its possible attributes and illustrations, with the strength of a giant, leaving a line of light on the pathway his mind has trod, till, unexhausted, and apparently inexhaustible, he brings this remarkable effort to a close by a peroration so highly sustained in its declamatory power, so abounding in illustration, so admirably framed to crown and clench the whole oration, that surprise, if it has even begun to wear off, kindles anew, and the hearer is left utterly prostrate and powerless by the whirlwind of ideas and emotions that has swept over him. This, however, only illustrates the liberty a man may take with elocution if he has genius to compensate for it. That member must beware who attempts to charm the House of Commons by a monotonous alto without Macaulay's wit, his power of enlightenment and fecundity of illustration.

From Quintilian to Blair, rhetoricians have insisted on the value of accuracy of expression, as promotive of accuracy of thought. Accuracy of delivery tends equally to this result; it does more, it improves the memory as well as the understanding, and imparts the power of concatenation of speech. The naturally voluble may dispense with this aid, but others will find it the only mode of learning public speaking.

A clergyman, who in his early days denied that grammar or emphasis had anything to do with pulpit exercises, one day found his mistake by the laughter created on his reading this text :—" And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle *me*, the *ass*, and they saddled *him*." Of this same divine it is told that a man whom he reprimanded for swearing, replied that he did not see any harm in it. "No harm in it," said the minister; "why do you not know the commandment, 'Swear not at all?'" "I do not swear at *all*," said the man, "I only swear at those who annoy me."

The emphasis which is suggested by the sense is the best guide. Let a person make sure of the sense, and his emphasis will be natural and varied. An active and original conception can alone produce personality of enunciation, which is the chief charm of oratory. Conception is the sole governor of intonation. Of the delicious magic of inflection Eben Jones has given us a poet's idea in his lines "To a Personification of Ariel at the Theatre."

If a new sound should music through the sky,  
 How would all hearing drink the challenging tone;  
 And when thou uttered'st thy denying reply  
 To this questioning of love, as Ariel alone  
 Only could utter it, suddenly making known  
 New voice, new human music—then did burn  
 Each listener, to divine, ere it was gone,  
 What feelings toned it; though none might learn,  
 How many, divine and deep, in that sweet "No" did yearn.

The offensiveness of affectation was justly satirised in the



confessions of a dandy given in a recent romance. Mr. Affection is recounting his rejection by a young lady, upon whom he had afflicted his attentions. “ ‘ You are mistaken ! ’ said she, replying to my look, ‘ it was *not* your dress,—it was *not* your manners. The young gentleman who comes from Bond-street to tune our piano, is quite as affable, and much more dressy.’ ‘ The people at the Royal Lodge, probably, afford you some little insight into my condition, as a pretext for your doing me the honour of admitting me into your acquaintance,’ said I, with considerable bitterness, for I was stung home. ‘ No—it was your *voice*,—it was the hypocritical modulation of your voice that satisfied me you had moved in the best society,’ replied Miss Vavasour, with provoking coolness ; ‘ I saw that you were a most delicate monster ; that you had a voice for me, and another for Annie,—a third for the pony,—a fourth for the lodge-keepers :—there was nothing *natural* about you ! ’ ”

Attracted by the pretensions of a placard, adorned by a testimonial from the *Times*, I went, in Glasgow, to hear some professional recitations. One of them was the “ Story of a Broken Heart.” The unfortunate girl, of whom it was told, did not die immediately, but it struck me she would have done so, had she heard Mr. Wilson recite her story. The subject was that piece of graceful effeminity, in which Washington Irving has told, with drawing-room sentimentality, the story of the proud love of the daughter of Curran for the unhappy and heroic Emmet.

No one can recite with propriety what he does not feel, and the key to gesture, as well to modulation, is earnestness. No actor can pourtray character unless he can realise it, and he can only realise it by making it for a time his own. Roger Kemble’s wife had been forbidden to marry an actor, and her father was inexorable at her disobedience ; but after he had seen her husband upon the stage, he relented, and forgave her with this observation—“ Well, well ! I see you have not diso-

beyed me after all ; for the man is not an actor, and never will be an actor !”

As the presence of genius will compensate for the neglect of the elocution of utterance, so earnestness and great ideas will produce eloquence of effect without gesture in delivery. It is said of Robert Hall that the text of his discourse was usually announced in the feeblest tone, and in a rapid manner, so as frequently to be inaudible to the majority of his congregation. After the exordium, he would commonly hint at, rather than explicitly announce, the very simple divisions of the subject on which he intended to treat. Then his thoughts would begin to multiply, and the rapidity of his utterance, always considerable, would increase as he proceeded and kindled. He had no oratorical action, scarcely any kind of motion, excepting an occasional lifting or waving of the right hand, and, in his most impassioned moments, an alternate retreat and advance in the pulpit by a short step. Sometimes the pain in his back, to which he was so great a martyr, would induce him to throw his arm behind, as if to give himself ease or support in the long-continued, and, to him, afflictive position of standing to address the people. Nothing of the effect which he produced depended on extraneous circumstances. There was no pomp, no rhetorical flourish, and few, though whenever they did occur, very appropriate, images—excepting towards the close of his sermon, when his imagination became excursive, and he winged his way through the loftiest sphere of contemplation. His sublimest discourses were in the beginning didactic and argumentative, then descriptive and pathetic, and, finally, in the highest and best sense, imaginative. Truth (to him) was their universal element, and to enforce its claims was his constant aim. Whether he attempted to engage the reason, the affections, or the fancy, all was subsidiary to this great end. He was always *in earnest*—profoundly in earnest. But it is also true that as a chaste, concise, and energetic style, is more effective than a florid, turgid and prolix one, so the judicious

employment of moderate gesture is more effective upon the genius of the English people, who love moderation, than any possible amplification of spasmodic attitudes or redundancy of grimace.

The prompting of Lucio to Isabel, when pleading before Angelo for the life of her brother, as rendered by Shakspeare in *Measure for Measure*, is one of the happiest practical lessons in elocutionary art on record. As a piece of preceptive teaching, neither the rhetoric of ancient or modern times has produced anything so happy, so concise, and yet so comprehensive, as Hamlet's directions to his players. It is a manual of elocution in miniature.



### CHAPTER III.

#### THEORY OF PERSUASION.

“RHETORIC,” says Plato, “is the art of ruling the minds of men :” but to rule mind you must know it. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin : but we cannot touch nature through the rules of art without knowing nature. “He who in an enlightened and literary society aspires to be a great poet must become a little child. He takes to pieces the whole web of his mind.”\* This is what the young rhetorician must do. He must tread backwards the path of life to the first moment of consciousness, and ask all possible questions of his own experience. Carlyle has said that a *healthy* man never asks himself such personal questions. But a *thoughtful* man does. Could the disembodied experience of men be presented to view, so that the conscious life of each could be palpable in bodily form, how few figures would present the entire lineaments of

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\* Macaulay, *Crit. and Hist. Essays*, vol. i.

mankind. We should behold an assemblage of mutilated figures, the limbs of some, the arms of others, the trunk, or the head, would be invisible—so little, as respects consciousness, do men generally possess themselves. As, however, man is himself essentially his own standard of judgment, is himself the measure of other men, it is inevitable that *he* will form a defective estimate of others who is defective himself. The rhetorician, then, who would hope to operate on the natures of others, must primarily make himself acquainted with his own.

An appeal to experience is the best test we have of the force of an inducement. "The argument," says Emerson, "which has not the power to reach my own practice, I may well doubt will fail to reach yours. I have heard an experienced counsellor say, that he never feared the effect upon a jury, of a lawyer who does not believe in his heart that his client ought to have a verdict." A remarkable instance of the result of an appeal to personal conviction is afforded in Bailey's Review of Berkeley's Theory of Vision. "Many years ago," says Mr. Bailey, "I held what may be styled a derivative opinion in favour of Berkeley's Theory of Vision, but having in the course of a philosophical discussion had occasion to explain it, I found on attempting to state *in my own language* the grounds on which it rested, that they no longer appeared to me to be so clear and conclusive as I had fancied them to be. I determined to make it the subject of a patient and dispassionate examination. The result has been a clear conviction in my own mind of its erroneousness, and a desire to state to the philosophical world the grounds on which that conviction has been formed." A philosophical illustration of the truth of Emerson's observation, that that statement is only fit to be made public which you have come at in attempting to satisfy your own curiosity. Men may live, and think, and reason, with the mere surface knowledge which life presents to every observer, but no one can master persuasion, as an art, unless

he passes in review the origin of ideas and analyses the motives of men.

A sound theory of intelligence is the basis of all systematic persuasion. Metaphysical philosophy has been prolific in its dissertations on the facts and attributes of human mentality, but the classification of intelligence laid down by some of the more judicious followers of Gall is the most scientific, and, consequently, the most intelligible which the student can follow. It is not possible to indicate a particular theory in detail, with a chance of its being universally useful. For the general characteristics of humanity are variously combined with the national, local, and individual, in every audience who may be addressed by tongue or pen. The simple elements of humanity, like the letters of the alphabet, are, according to the arrangement of circumstances, spread out into countless volumes of character, each written in a peculiar language, and requiring a copious glossary to render it intelligible to the reader.\* The general principles, say of phrenology, indicate the outlines of human nature, and the study of men and manners fills up the detail. An old writer, I think Ralph Cudworth, says, "It is acknowledged by all, that sense is passion. And there is in all sensation, without dispute, first a passion in the body of the sentient, which bodily passion is nothing else but local motion impressed upon the nerves from the objects without, and thence propagated and communicated to the brain, where all sensation is made. For there is no other action of one body upon another, nor other change or mutation of bodies conceivable or intelligible, besides local motion—which motion in that body which moves another, is called action; in that which is moved by another, passion. And, therefore, when a compound object very remotely distant is perceived by us, since it is by some passion made upon our body, there must of necessity be a continual propagation of some local motion of press-

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\* Mrs. L. Grimstone.

ure from thence unto the organs of our sense or nerves, and so unto the brain. As when we see many fixed stars sparkling in a clear night, though they be all of them so many semi-diameters of the earth distant from us, yet it must, of necessity, be granted, that there are local motions or pressure from them, which we call the light of them, propagated continually or uninterruptedly through the fluid heaven, unto our optic nerves, or else we could not see them." This indicates very plainly the philosophy of impressions. We have nothing to do here with the controversies of metaphysicians concerning the transcendentalism of intuitive knowledge. It may be supernatural. It is, however, certain that a great proportion of human knowledge is the result of material relations, and to these relations the precepts of knowledge apply. We may, therefore, indicate with sufficient accuracy for practical purposes, that the consciousness of external things is produced or generated by the actions of those things on the organs of sense. The brain has no power to create, only a susceptibility to receive notions. The brain is the forge of thought,\* and the rhetorician is the smith who hammers out ideas in it.

So far forth as human conduct is influenced by material considerations, and these are capable of being combined into a system, confidence can be imparted to the speaker, and certainty infused into his efforts.

It might be illustrated at considerable length and by distinguished examples, that appeals to religious sentiments will always be avoided by a judicious orator, when addressing mixed assemblies. They are proper enough when spoken to a religious audience, but when employed for the purpose of influencing a mixed meeting they may fail to affect a considerable portion. The experienced and well informed speaker has always a wider resource. He can draw his arguments from moral and political considerations, founded on utility. These

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\* Carlyle.

all men can understand and feel. In those cases in which an orator cannot conscientiously restrict himself to this species of reasoning, he must take the other course, but let him not calculate on complete success or universal impressions.

The great business is to find out the right notion, and adapt it to the understandings of those whom we address. This world is very matter-of-fact, men are very much the creatures of ideas. Notions govern everything. Impulses are the real destiny—men follow them as surely as the stars or the planets, and it is in this sense that what is to be *is*.

As garment draws the garment's hem,  
Men their fortunes bring with them.\*

From lowest to highest all are attached by that which has the attractive relation. Matter draws matter. The magnet has no attraction for gold or copper, but how it clings to the iron! Man has various attractions—gold, honour, love. To know what ideas are common to men is to know humanity—to know how they gained is to know how to govern men by speech or pen.

*Every* man, said Pitt, has his price. Whether Pitt had sounded the venality of all patriotism I know not. Of course he had fixed the market price of his own virtue. But with more truth and less offensiveness it may be said, that every man has his reason, which, when once presented to him, will sway him: and to find this out is the problem rhetoric has to solve. I am not more favourable than Hood to the plan of dropping truth gently, as if it were China, and likely to break. But if a fair case be so stated as not to mortify others by assumed arrogance, as not to annoy by ceaseless importunity, as not to disgust by seeming vanity, but accompanied by evident indications of disinterested sincerity, it will nearly always prove acceptable. It is not the truth men hate, but

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\* Emerson.

the unwise and untutored auxiliaries which so often attend its enunciation. "He who would correct my false view of facts," said one who understood the despotism of a wise method, "he must hold up *the same facts* in the true *order of thought*, and I can *never go back*. A man who thinks in the same direction as myself, but sees further, who has tastes like mine, but greater power, will rule me any day, and make me love my ruler."\*

The young orator will do well to notice that morality is better understood, at least in theory, than in former periods of our history, and that the public require sincerity on the part of a speaker ; and a life which shall illustrate what the orator seeks to enforce, will add materially to his influence. The reader may ask—May not a recommendation be a good one though the giver of it be bad? This is not the question. Is it not an advantage when both are worthy? The public may accept good advice from men who will not take it themselves. But is it not the object of a wise Rhetoric to increase the number of men who will take sound advice? If the public should be composed of men who hear only and never practice, who does not see that we may give over all exhortations of amendment. Mankind reason that that which is good for the public is good for individuals, since individuals make up the public. And when it is seen that a man does not follow his own advice, it is concluded that either he is a simpleton, and consequently is not to be heeded, or that he is secretly conscious of some inapplicability in his own recommendations, and consequently is to be suspected.

The moral existence of men is made up of a few trains of thought, which, from the cradle to the grave, are excited and re-excited, again and again, at the suggestion of sensitive impressions. These leading ideas rule despotically over conduct, and whoever awakens these associations governs those whom he addresses. It is in the appeals to these ancient impressions

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\* Emerson.



that we recognise the power and genius of the poet. It is in these leading ideas that we see the source of character. These are the great features in the lives of men which the rhetorician studies. His knowledge of them constitutes the weapons with which he works. When Napoleon in Egypt was threatened by his disaffected generals he vanquished them by an appeal to the three leading traits in their character—their pride, their honour, and their bravery. Walking coolly among them, he said, "Soldiers, you are Frenchmen! You are too many to assassinate, and too few to intimidate me." The rebellion was blown aside with the breath of these words. The fury of the men was subdued to admiration, and they turned away, exclaiming, "Damn him, how brave he is." Truly is it said the heart has no avenue so open as that of flattery; which, like some enchantment, lays its guards asleep.

A groundless outcry has been raised against speakers who appeal to the feelings. The only question to be decided is—What are the proper feelings of men? To appeal to these must always be right. The conclusions arrived at through the medium of such feelings are as legitimate as conclusions arrived at by appeals wholly belonging to the understanding. Feelings are the stays of intellect—the first links in the chain of powerful argument. The appeal to reality is the foundation of conviction. The lion was not to be subdued by pictures of Hercules and Theseus—he wanted the fact of his superior strength displayed. It was necessary that Hercules and Theseus should appear.

In nine years' experience in the office of a public tutor in one of the Universities, Paley found, in discoursing to young persons upon topics of morality, that unless the subject was so drawn up to a point as to exhibit the full force of an objection, or the exact place of a doubt, before any explanation was entered upon—in other words, unless some curiosity was excited before it was attempted to be satisfied—the labour of

the teacher was lost. When information was not desired, it was seldom, he found, retained.

The art of education consists in finding out what the child or adult *wants* to know. Inspired with desire to know, he is inspired with power to learn, and excited aptitude is the happy moment of acquirement. This neglected progress is arrested. This fact explains the failure of half the orations and lectures of these days. An audience is an adult school. It has, in the short space of an hour, to be educated in a new purpose. The undertaking is presumptuous, and is only to be accomplished by the union of rare judgment, disciplined powers, a store of means, and unflinching energy. Yet how many rush into the arena of oratory without forethought, and go home, wondering why they failed, and blaming the apathy of the people. Humanity is an instrument not to be played upon by unskilful performers. Had we men who studied oratory as great artists do music, painting, and sculpture, the majesty of ancient eloquence would yet flourish among us.

We can do without any article of luxury we never had, but when once obtained it is not in human nature to surrender it voluntarily. Of twelve thousand clocks left by Sam Slick, only ten were returned. "We trust to soft sawder," said Sam, "to get them into the house, and to human nature that they never come out of it." Yet how many persons expect to produce effects upon assemblies of men who never bestow half the time upon the study of their natures as was given by our American clock-seller!

The wise persuader will therefore treasure up all striking facts connected with the influencement of character, adapting, with rigid justice, the motive to the condition—to the great occasion, the strong inducement. Then to borrow the words of Hazlitt:—"The orator is only concerned to give a tone of masculine firmness to the will, to brace the sinews and muscles of the mind: not to delight our nervous sensibilities, or soften the mind into voluptuous indolence. The flowery and senti-

mental style is, of all others, the most intolerable in a speaker. He must be confident, inflexible, uncontrollable, overcoming all opposition by his ardour and impetuosity. We do not command others by sympathy with them, but by power, by passion, by will." On other occasions the orator is not reluctant to remember that the words of sincerity and kindness never fail when addressed to people not stirred by passion or rendered sullen by real or fancied contempt. Then the iron argument and the imperious air give place to the happier philosophy sung by Darwin, which teaches—

How Love and Sympathy, with potent charm,  
Warm the cold heart—the lifted hand disarm;  
Allure with pleasures, and alarm with pains,  
And bind society in golden chains.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### METHOD.

THE art of persuasion is dependent on no one thing so much as Method. To have the fact, and to know how to tell it, is to hold rhetorical success in our hands. But it is of no use to have the fact unless we know how to tell it, and it is this which Method teaches. There is, said the "Quarterly Review" lately, no power over human affairs like the *right* word spoken at the *right* season.

Method is derived from a Greek word, signifying a path, a way, or transit. Where there are many transits, step follows step in pursuit of an object. And as there must be, for a true pursuit, a *definite* object in view, the principle of *unity* is implied in that of *progression*. Hence in a true method there must be a definite pursuit, otherwise circumstances will create sensations; but there will be no thought without method, and there may be restless and incessant activity, but without

method there will be no progress. When the mind becomes accustomed to the outward impressions of objects, it turns to their relations, which hence become its prime pursuit, and may be called the materials of method.

The kinds of relations are two, the one arising from that which *must be*, the other that by which we merely perceive that *it is*. The former is called law, in its original acceptation, laying down the rule—the other is called the relation of theory.\*

This is the method of science—it applies to the order pursued in the arrangement of encyclopædias. The method of art, if not so rigid, is yet regular, and marks both performances and character.

Coleridge asks, "What is it that first strikes us, and strikes us at once, in a man of education, and which, among educated men, so instantly distinguishes the man of superior mind? Not always the weight or novelty of his remarks, nor always the interest of the facts which he communicates—for the subject of conversation may chance to be trivial, and its duration to be short. Still less can any just admiration arise from any peculiarity in his words and phrases, for every man of practical good sense will follow, as far as the matters under consideration will permit him, that golden rule of Cæsar's—*Insolens verbum, tanquam scopidum, evitare*. The true cause of the impression made on us is, that his mind is *methodical*. We perceive this, in the unpremeditated, and evidently habitual arrangement of his words, flowing spontaneously and necessarily from the clearness of the leading idea, from which distinctness of mental vision, when men are fully accustomed to it, they obtain a habit of foreseeing at the beginning of every sentence how it is to end, and how all its parts may be brought out in the best and most orderly succession. However irregular and desultory the conversation may happen to be, there

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\* See Encyclopædia Metropolitana, Art. "Method."

is *Method* in the fragments."\* The illustration of this is easy.

Two persons of opposite opinions will often meet—the one to convert the other. For instance: A seeks to bring B to the adoption of his opinions. I have witnessed the experiment often. The general course of procedure is this. A commences to unfold, expatiate on, and enforce his views. He expects thus to win B to their entertainment. But the mistake is a grave one. A argues *at* B when he should reason *with* him. A thus stands on the platform of his opinions and preaches to B, who is perched upon a platform of his own. A thus expects B to come to him. B probably expects the same of A. Thus both expect what neither intends.

A, in expecting B to come to him, assumes that on the part of his opponent there exists a predisposition for his views. This should never be assumed. It is the first endeavour of a wise propagandist to *create* it if it does not exist, and strengthen it if it does—and whether it exists or not he should always condescend as though it did not. The business of A, the converter, is to go down to the platform B stands upon, to inquire his principles, study his views and turn of thought until he finds some common ground of faith, morals, opinion, or practice, with which he can identify himself. The propagandist should commence by playing the pathfinder. The business of A is to find a path from B's platform to his own down which B can agreeably walk. When a common ground is found, A argues on that to B. The narrow spot of identity soon enlarges if A has truth on his side, for all truth, like electricity, has a tendency to pass into all bodies uncharged with it, until an equilibrium of light is established, and the current is universal.

A, in finding a common ground in B's intellectual sphere, establishes an equality with B. This gives A an advantage. By studying B's views, instead of making B study his, he con-

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\* Encyclopædia Metropolitana.

descends to B—he thus establishes fraternity. This predisposes B to good will.

Equality and fraternity are the two inlets to the understanding. Conversion is uniformity. It ends in intellectual equality. It must begin so. The pleasure of universal opinion is the harmony it creates—the propagandists commence in fraternity, that being the auspicious harbinger of harmony.

It is of no use saying you cannot find a common ground. He who cannot find it, cannot convert. How can persons, any more than bodies, cohere, who never touch? So long as each denies to the other a particle of reason on his side—so long as each maintains an infallibility of pretension to complete truth—they both assume what is contrary to the nature of things, and exclude the common ground which must be established between them—where truth and error can join issue. There is no impassable gulf between contending men or contending opinions, but that dug by pride and passion. We all have a common starting-point. We have a common consciousness of impression—a common nature to investigate—a common sincerity actuates us—truth is our common object, and we have a common interest in discovering it. Nature made us friends: it is false pride that makes us enemies. A common ground exists between all disputants. This is an important fact too little attended to, or indeed too little understood by inexperienced thinkers. The common ground which exists is not one which policy makes, but one that nature provides.

These remarks make conviction to depend upon truth, not upon forms of procedure. Nothing is recommended here which is inconsistent with truth—no cunning questioning, no sophistical entrapment. The sole precepts are those of condescension and contrast. Find a common ground of agreement, and you find a common point of sight, from which all objects are seen in the same light; and a clear plane is obtained on which principles can be drawn, and a perfect contrast of truth

and error displayed. He who has the truth will make it plainer by wisdom of procedure. Differences are often made wider by irrelevant, repulsive debate. Differences which did not exist are often created in this way. All men desire the truth, and there is a way in which all can find it. The understandings of men run in a given channel—each thinker looks as it were through a telescope of his own. Let A bring his views within the vision of B, and the chances are in favour of B seeing the truth, if truth there be. If he sees error, A is benefitted by the discovery made by a clearer sight than his own. “The faculty of speech,” says Quintilian, “we derive from nature—but the art from observation. For as in physic, men, by seeing that some things promote health and others destroy it, formed the art upon those observations; in like manner, by perceiving that some things in discourse are said to advantage and others not, they accordingly marked those things in order to imitate the one and avoid the other.”

It is a maxim of the schoolmen, “*contrariorum eadem est scientia*,” we never really know what a thing is, unless we are also able to give a sufficient account of its opposite. This is the maxim of contrast that enters into all effective persuasion.

Various rules are given to direct the treatment of Regular Subjects. We are to begin, says Walker, with—1. Definition, 2. Cause, 3. Antiquity or Novelty, 4. Universality or Locality, 5. Advantages or Disadvantages.

A Theme, which is proving some truth, is said to have these parts—1. The Proposition or meaning of the theme, 2. The Reason in favour of it, 3. The Confirmation or display of the unreasonableness of the contrary opinion, 4. The Simile or illustration, 5. Example from history, 6. Testimony of others, 7. Conclusion or summary.

Writers are not all agreed in determining the parts of an oration, though the difference is rather in the manner of considering them than in the things themselves. Cicero mentions

six, viz., Introduction, Narration, Proposition, Confirmation, Confutation, and Conclusion.

Writers are not agreed upon the division of orations, because nature has not agreed. All subjects will not admit of being treated under so many heads, and some audiences will not admit of the formality. Sometimes an exordium is a bore, and a peroration tedious. Tact retrenches method as circumstances dictate. Paley's custom was to break down a subject into as many distinct parts as it really appeared to contain, and make each of them the subject of a separate and rigorous investigation. This seems a wise rule: we then take such parts as the subject affords, in the order prescribed, abbreviating them as the knowledge or temper of the audience may require.

The facts of necessity and discretion premised, the most practical formula of general procedure seems to me to be,—1. Give the Introduction. 2. Explain the terms of the proposition, show what is granted and what disputed on each side, and then state the point of controversy. 3. Examine objections, and establish your own proposition. 4. Refute objections, and expose fallacies. 5. Make observations of enforcement naturally suggested by the subject:—

These rules of old discover'd, not devised,  
Are Nature still, but Nature methodised.

It is our opinion, says one of our critical journals, that all things should be made known in their proper places. No knowledge can be complete or thoroughly wholesome which is partial.

Dr. Paley has furnished two observations which may be usefully borne in mind in the enforcement of topics.

1. In all cases, where the mind feels itself in danger of being confounded by variety, it is safe to rest upon a few strong points, or perhaps upon a single instance. Amongst a multitude of proofs, it is *one* that does the business.



2. A just reasoner removes from his consideration, not only what he knows, but what he does not know, touching matters not strictly connected with his argument, *i. e.*, not forming the *very steps* of his deduction: *beyond these* his knowledge and his ignorance are alike relative.

The simplicity and wisdom of profound method has been illustrated in the works of Morelly. Villegardelle says of Morelly's *Essays on the Human Mind*, treating on the analysis of the *intellectual* faculties, published in 1743:—"The substance of this small educational treatise, which contains the developed germ of the method of instruction to which Mr. Jacotot has given his name, is comprised in the two following propositions:—

"1. The inclinations of the mind are reducible to two, *viz.*, *Desire to know* and *Love of order*—to these two ends we must refer all, even the amusements of children.

"2. It is sufficient to present to the soul [understanding?] objects in the same order as it generally follows, without making it perceive that it must attend to them."

The first essential of any kind of greatness is that it should have a purpose. We do not suspect the presence of genius till we feel this manifest. The Duke of Wellington has few arts which win applause. He is illiterate. All the school-boys in the kingdom laughed at his letters. Instead of the refinement of the classic council-table, his "Despatches" are as coarse as fish-market bulletins—yet has he achieved greatness of a certain kind, because he has decision of character.

One of his biographers—I think it is the Rev. Mr. Wright—has given us the key to the Duke's success in a few thoughtful words—"One characteristic of the Duke of Wellington strikes the reader from the very first, even when but a novice in war or statesmanship—his resolute will and unbounded self-reliance. Confident in his own capacity, he thinks, decides, and acts while other men are hesitating and asking advice. He is evidently conscious that *decision and*

*promptitude, even though sometimes a man may err for want of due deliberation, will, in the long run, more often conduct to success than a slow judgment, that comes too late.*" This is the secret. The capacity to see this truth and the resolution to act upon it, is the capacity to rise above common men. Innumerable people will strike out a course and pursue it—while all goes well—but the temper of greatness ever remains unshaken by reverses. It places its life on the hazard of a well-chosen plan, and looks for failures and defeats, but relies on the "*long run*" of persistency for success.

The intellectual character of the Duke of Wellington, so far as it has been displayed in civil affairs, accords with what his military exploits indicates. A simple and brief directness are the qualities of his speeches. "He strips a subject of all extraneous and unnecessary adjuncts, and exposes it in its natural proportions. He scents a fallacy afar off, and hunts it down at once without mercy. *He has certain constitutional principles which are to him real standards.* He measures propositions or opinions by these standards, and as they come up or fall short, so they are accepted or disposed of." The Duke of Wellington early took sides—he learned well the principles of which he would become the partisan. I have *italicised* the words in the sentence just quoted from "Fraser," which indicates his intellectual habit. It is hard to tell, generally, what are the "constitutional principles" of British liberty. But it is not hard to tell what they are when you know who uses the phrase. The principles of the Throne and Court may be expressed in three propositions. The Duke having adopted these, sits at ease, and measures the plausible speeches of progress by them, and unmask the sophism of the quasi-liberal.

But, however directed, men will ever respect straightforwardness of character. It is heroic in that man, whoever he may be, who looks over the troubled sea of time, and manfully elects his course.

Stern is the on-look of Necessity :  
 Not without shudder may a human hand  
 Grasp the mysterious urn of destiny.

There is heroism in the very act—which cannot be too much applauded. It is this which converts life from being a phantom or a manœuvre into a reality and a process. It throws into ignoble shade your petty men of expedients. Principle either gives success or confers dignity—by chicanery all may be lost, and nothing noble can ever be gained. By manœuvre weak men seek to cheat human nature, cajole fate, and win a glorious destiny by paltry tricks. But the whole order of things is against it. Such a course may triumph, but it is the triumph of luck—not success. It is accident—not merit. Dignity is alone born of principle and purpose.

He who by principle is swayed  
 In truth and justice still the same,  
 Is neither of the crowd afraid,  
 Tho' civil broils the state inflame,  
 Nor to a haughty tyrant's frown will stoop,  
 Nor to a raging storm when all the winds are up.\*

What decision is to character, what principle is to morals—so is method to literature. To have a clear purpose, and vigorously pursue it, is the strong element of rhetorical success. It is this feature which leads to the delineation of individual character. Coleridge has shown that the character of Hamlet is decided by the constant recurrence, in the midst of every pursuit, of philosophic reflections. Mrs. Quickly's talk is marked by that lively incoherence so common with garrulous women, whereby the last idea suggests the successor, each carrying the speaker further from the original subject. After this manner :—“Speaking of tails—we always like those that end well—Hogg's, for instance—speaking of hogs—we saw one of these animals the other day lying in the gutter, and in the opposite one a well-dressed man ; the first had a ring in

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\* Horace, Ode 3, Lib. III.

his nose, the latter had a ring on his finger. The man was drunk, the hog was sober. A man is known by the company he keeps," &c. As Dr. Caius clips English, some of Bulwer's characters amplify periods. Dominie Sampson exclaims, "Prodigious." Sam Weller talks slang. In other cases an overwhelming passion pervades a character, or an intellectual idiosyncrasy is the peculiar quality, leading the possessor to look at everything in a given light. But whatever may be the feature fixed upon, its methodical working out constitutes individuality of character.

In the courts young barristers are drilled in an iron method. A judge always expects, at the outset, the enunciation of the object of the speech. A judicious speaker will always observe this rule for the sake of his audience. As a system of reasoning proceeds from certain axioms which can never be lost sight of except at the peril of confusion, so a discourse proceeds on something which is taken for granted, and which must be confessed and explained at the beginning, or the speaker will be considered only as indulging in airy speculations, and his hearers will be bewildered instead of enlightened, and be anxious about the danger of a fall instead of intent on the scene placed before them. The advantages of the course here advised have been well enforced in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*. "In purely argumentative statement, or in the argumentative division of mixed statements, and especially in argumentative speeches, it is essential that the issue to be proved should be distinctly announced in the beginning in order that the tenour and drift that way of everything that is said may be the better apprehended; and it is also useful when the chain of argument is long, to give a forecast of the principal bearings and junctures whereby the attention will be more easily secured, and pertinently directed throughout the more closely consecutive detail, and each proposition of the series will be clenched in the memory by its foreknown relevancy to what is to follow." These are well-

known rules which it were superfluous to cite except for the instruction of the young. But examples may be occasionally observed of juvenile orators who will conceal the end they aim at, until they have led their hearers through the long chain of antecedents in order that they may produce surprise by forcing a sudden acknowledgment of what had not been foreseen. The disadvantage of this method is that it puzzles and provokes the hearer through the sequence, and confounds him in the conclusion; and gives an overcharged impression of the orator's ingenuity on the part of those who may have attended to him sufficiently to have been convinced. It is a method by which the business of the argument is sacrificed to a puerile ostentation in the conduct of it, and the ease and satisfaction of the auditors sacrificed to the vanity of the arguer.

But though the purport of a speech must be avowed, the drift of an illustration may be concealed. One of Mr. Fox's Covent Garden orations affords a brilliant example. He took the case of certain poachers who had, about that time, suffered imprisonment in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and he calculated the days of their incarceration, and the pecuniary loss their families had sustained by their detention from labour. The statistics were dry as summer's dust. What this had to do with the question of the corn laws no one could divine—when, by a masterly turn of thought, he asked—“If poachers are so punished who take the rich man's bird, how ought peers to be punished who take the poor man's bread?” The house rose with surprise. The climax had the effect of a light applied to a funeral pile, in which the arguments of the protectionists were to be consumed before the meeting.

Method is often of moment in trivial things. Some years ago it was the custom in Glasgow, when a fire broke out in the evening, for the police to enter the theatre and announce the fire and the locality, that if any person concerned was present he might be apprised of the impending loss. On one

occasion when the watch commenced to announce "Fire—45 Candleriggs," the audience took alarm at the word Fire, and concluded that it applied to the theatre. A rush ensued which prevented the full notice being heard, and several persons lost their lives. The inversion of the order of announcement, "45 Candleriggs—Fire," would have prevented the disaster. But afterwards the practice of such announcements was forbidden, it being impossible, I suppose, to reform the rhetoric of policemen.

Of the effect of the want of method in neutralising the most magnificent powers, Burke is a remarkable instance. As an orator, Burke dazzled his hearers, then distracted them, and finished by fatiguing or offending them. And it was not uncouth elocution and exterior only, which impaired the efficacy of his speeches. Burke almost always deserted his subject, before he was abandoned by his audience. In the progress of a long discourse he was never satisfied with proving that which was principally in question, or with enforcing the single measure which it was his business and avowed purpose to enforce,—he diverged to a thousand collateral topics,—he demonstrated as many disputed propositions,—he established principles in all directions,—he illuminated the whole horizon with his magnificent, but scattered lights. There was, nevertheless, no keeping in his spoken compositions,—no proportion,—no subserviency of inferior groups to greater,—no apparent harmony or unity of purpose. He forgot that there was but a single point to prove, and his auditors in their turn forgot that they had undergone the process of *conviction* upon any.

When Fadladeen essays his critical opinion on the poem of Feramorz, he commences thus:—"In order to convey with clearness my opinion of the story this young man has related, it is necessary to take a review of all the stories that have ever"—"My good Fadladeen!" exclaimed Lalla Rookh, interrupting him, "we really do not deserve that you should

give yourself so much trouble. Your opinion of the poem we have just heard will, no doubt, be abundantly edifying, without further waste of your valuable erudition." "If that be all," replied the critic—evidently mortified at not being allowed to show how much he knew about *every thing* but the subject immediately before him—"if that be all that is required, the matter is easily despatched." He then proceeded to analyse the poem. The wit of Moore was never more happily expended than in satirising this learned discursiveness. The race of Fadladeen is immortal.

A few years ago a distinguished clergyman of the Universalist denomination was accused, while in Lowell, of "violently dragging his wife from a revival meeting, and compelling her to go home with him." He replied, "Firstly, I have never attempted to influence my wife in her views, nor her choice of a meeting. Secondly, my wife has not attended any of the revival meetings in Lowell. Thirdly, I have not attended even one of those meetings for any purpose whatever. Fourthly, neither my wife nor myself has any inclination to attend those meetings. And, fifthly, I never had a wife!" This divine must have had "Order" large.

Next to those who talk as though they would never come to the point, are a class of bores who talk as though they did not know what the point was. Before they have proceeded far in telling a story, they stumble upon some Mr. What's-his-name, whom they have forgotten, and, though it does not matter whether he had a name or not, the narrative is made to stand still until they have gone through the tiresome and fruitless task of trying to remember it—in which they *never* succeed.

A gorgeous instance of method occurs in W. J. Fox's Sermon on Human Brotherhood,\* in which polished taste has so adjusted each clause that they reach a climax worthy of that Grecian art which the passage celebrates.

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\* Sermons on Christian Morality.

“From the dawn of intellect and freedom Greece has been a watchword on the earth. There rose the social spirit to soften and refine her chosen race, and shelter, as in a nest, her gentleness from the rushing storm of barbarism—there liberty first built her mountain throne, first called the waves her own, and shouted across them a proud defiance to despotism’s banded myriads ; there the arts and graces danced around humanity, and stored man’s home with comforts, and strewed his path with roses, and bound his brows with myrtle, and fashioned for him the breathing statue, and summoned him to temples of snowy marble, and charmed his senses with all forms of eloquence, and threw over his final sleep their veil of loveliness ; there sprung poetry, like their own fabled goddess, mature at once from the teeming intellect, gilt with the arts and armour that defy the assaults of time, and subdue the heart of man ; there matchless orators gave the world a model of perfect eloquence, the soul the instrument on which they played, and every passion of our nature but a tone which the master’s touch called forth at will ; there lived and taught the philosophers of bower and porch, of pride and pleasure, of deep speculation and of useful action, who developed all the acuteness, and refinement, and excursiveness, and energy of mind, and were the glory of their country, when their country was the glory of the earth.”



## CHAPTER V.

### DISCIPLINE.

SINCE custom, says the wise Bacon, is the principal magistrate of a man’s life, let him, by all means, endeavour to obtain good customs. Digressiveness is the natural state of the human faculties, till custom or habit comes in to give them a settled direction. Man is as liable to be influenced by the last



impression as by any preceding one ; and the *liability* of man is the characteristic of children. The teacher knows this, for it is only by infinite diversion that children can be instructed for hours together, or governed without coercion. It is the object of discipline to check the tendency to diversion, and give stability to method. A man may be made to perceive method, but not to follow it without the power of discipline. A child accustomed to it will go to bed in the dark with peace and pleasure, but all the rhetoric in the world would not accomplish the same end without habit. Nothing but habit will give the power of habit.

When Malibran was introduced to Rossini, as a girl of fourteen, by her father, Garcia, having sung a cavatina, the grand maestro said, "Practise, Mademoiselle, and you must inevitably rise to the highest point of your profession."

Mr. John Foster, in his prospectus of his ruled copy-books, remarks that "The grand secret in teaching writing is to bestow much attention upon a little variety. The necessity of a *continued repetition* of the same exercise till it can be executed with correctness, cannot be too strongly insisted on. But, as this reiteration is tedious for an age so fond of novelty as that of childhood, we should keep as close to the maxim as possible, and, by a judicious intermixture of a few slightly differing forms, contrive to fix attention, and to ensure repetition. 'The method of teaching anything to children,' says Locke, 'is by repeated practice, and the same action done over and over again, until they have got the HABIT of doing it well ; a method that has so many advantages, whichever way we come to consider it, that I wonder how it could possibly be so much neglected.' Again : 'Children should never be set to perfect themselves in two parts of an action at the same time.' We have here the highest authority insisting on the very points which we labour to enforce, viz :—1. That it is only by constant reiteration, and persevering, pains-taking efforts, that ease and correctness in penmanship can be attained.

2. That the pupil should not advance too hastily, but proceed by natural gradations, from the simplest to the more difficult combinations." This discipline of penmanship may stand, also, for the discipline of elocution, for *men* are as children on the verge of a new art.

A speaker, like an actor, is subjected to the criticism of a casual hearing. The auditor who hears you but once will form an opinion of you for ever. Against this injustice of judgment there is no protection but in acquiring such a mastery over your powers as to be able always to exert them well—to strike, astonish, or impress, in some respect or other, at every appearance. A man, therefore, who has a reputation to acquire or preserve will keep silence whenever he is in any danger of speaking indifferently. He will practice so often in private, and train himself so perseveringly, that perfection will become a second nature, and the power of proficiency never desert him. The uninitiated, who think genius is an impulsive effort that costs nothing, little dream with what patience the professional singer or actor observes regular habits and judicious exercise—how they treasure all their strength and power for the hour of appearance.

From Demosthenes to Curran, the personnel of orators has illustrated the triumphs of application as much as the triumphs of genius. "One day, an acquaintance, in speaking of Curran's eloquence, happened to observe that it must have been born with him. 'Indeed, my dear sir,' replied Curran, 'it was not ; it was born three and twenty years and some months after me ; and, if you are satisfied to listen to a dull historian, you shall have the history of its nativity. When I was at the Temple, a few of us formed a little debating club. Upon the first night of meeting I attended, my foolish heart throbbing with the anticipated honour of being styled "the learned member that opened the debate," or "the very eloquent gentleman who has just sat down." I stood up—the question was the Catholic claims or the slave trade, I protest I now forget which, but

the difference, you know, was never very obvious—my mind was stored with about a folio volume of matter, but I wanted a preface, and for want of a preface the volume was never published. I stood up, trembling through every fibre; but, remembering, that in this I was but imitating Tully, I took courage, and had actually proceeded almost as far as “Mr. Chairman,” when, to my astonishment and terror, I perceived that every eye was turned upon me. There were only six or seven present, and the room could not have contained as many more; yet was it, to my panic-struck imagination, as if I were the central object in nature, and assembled millions were gazing upon me in breathless expectation. I became dismayed and dumb. My friends cried “Hear him!” but there was nothing to hear. My lips, indeed, went through the pantomime of articulation, but I was like the unfortunate fiddler at the fair, who, upon coming to strike up the solo that was to ravish every ear, discovered that an enemy had maliciously soaped his bow. So you see, sir, it was not born with me. However, though my friends despaired of me, the *cacoethes loquendi* was not to be subdued without a struggle. I was for the present silenced, but I still attended our meetings with the most laudable *regularity*, and even ventured to accompany the others to a more ambitious theatre, the club of Temple Bar. One of them was upon his legs; a fellow of whom it was difficult to decide whether he was most distinguished for the filth of his person or the flippancy of his tongue—just such another as Harry Flood would have called “the highly gifted gentleman with the dirty cravat and greasy pantaloons.” I found this learned personage in the act of calumniating chronology by the most preposterous anachronisms. He descanted upon Demosthenes, the glory of the Roman forum—spoke of Tully as the famous contemporary and rival of Cicero—and, in the short space of one half hour, transported the straits of Marathon three several times to the plains of Thermopylæ. Thinking that I had a right to know something of these matters, I

looked at him with surprise. When our eyes met, there was something like a wager of battle in mine ; upon which the erudite gentleman instantly changed his invective against antiquity into an invective against me, and concluded by a few words of friendly counsel (*horresco referens*) to " orator mum," who, he doubted not, possessed wonderful talents for eloquence, although he would recommend him to show it in future by some more popular method than his silence. I followed his advice, and, I believe, not entirely without effect. So, sir, you see that to try the bird the spur must touch his blood.'

"The discovery, on this occasion, of his talents for public speaking, encouraged him to proceed in his studies with additional energy and vigour. The defect in his enunciation (at school he went by the cognomen of 'Stuttering Jack Curran') he corrected by a *regular system* of daily reading aloud, slowly, and with strict regard to pronunciation, passages from his favourite authors. His person was short, and his appearance ungraceful and without dignity. To overcome these disadvantages, he recited and studied his postures before a mirror, and adopted a method of gesticulation suited to his appearance. Besides a *constant* attendance at the debating clubs, he accustomed himself to extemporaneous eloquence in private, by proposing cases to himself, which he debated with the same care as if he had been addressing a jury."\*

Mr. Macready, in the level part of the character of Mordaunt, in the *Steward*, and in some others, has been said† to exhibit that very rare acquirement, a perfectly unconstrained and graceful style of expression, accompanied by a cool, quiet, and unconscious self-possession, in which the manners of a gentleman consist. This bearing, so indispensable in the speaker, is rarely to be acquired except by intercourse with good society. No closet theory will impart it so surely as the discipline of communication.

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\* Hogg's Weekly Instructor.

† Blackwood, 1819.

Men of brilliant rather than solid powers dazzle themselves and others with isolated thoughts, too little caring for coherency. In this way Hazlitt has told us that "An *improving* actor, artist, or poet, never becomes a great one. A man of genius rises and passes by these *risers*. A volcano does not give warning when it will break out, nor a thunderbolt send word of its approach." To this it is sufficient to reply, that the volcano is not the production of a moment, nor is the thunderbolt. The occasion of the display is sudden, but the collection of power, natural or human, is of slow growth.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### TACT.

IN matters not absolutely scientific, the principles of Method are more arbitrary, and dependent upon the circumstances in which a speaker finds himself placed. We may abandon the order of nature, and follow that of the understanding, where conviction can be more readily effected. This is the province of Tact. Method is straightforward procedure—Tact is adaptation. Method applies to general, Tact to special, occasions.

The distinction between Method and Tact is illustrated in the following practical remarks of Paley :—"For the purpose of addressing different understandings and different apprehensions—for the purpose of sentiment—for the purpose of exciting admiration of our subject—we diversify our views, we multiply examples. [This is Tact.] But for the purpose of strict argument one clear instance is sufficient ; and not only sufficient, but capable, perhaps, of generating a firmer assurance than what can arise from a divided attention." [This is Method.]

When an opponent urges an objection, one way of reply-

ing to it is by endeavouring to prove that the assertion contained in the objection is not true. Another alternative, of which we may sometimes avail ourselves, is that, if even the assertion be true, it is no objection to our position.

It sometimes happens that the argument advanced against us is really an argument in our favour. Tact discovers and avails itself of these advantages. Method arranges the materials, Tact applies the resources, of reasoning.

It is the judicious application of means that constitutes Tact. In journalism Tact is an indispensable requisite. The history of Mr. Murray's daily paper, the "Representative," published for six or eight months, about twenty years ago, is abundant proof that unlimited command of capital, first-rate literary abilities in every branch of knowledge, and the highest possible patronage, are all insufficient to establish a London morning paper without that commodity which alone lends practical value to the other three, and which is far more difficult to be procured than the three put together. What the princely fortune of Mr. Murray, and his intellectual Titans of the "Quarterly," and all his regal and legal, and ermined and coronetted, and lay and clerical, and civil and military, friends could not obtain, was the simple but inestimable gift called Tact.\*

Hamilton's Parliamentary Logic abounds in maxims which that experienced tactitian had treasured up, observed, or invented, during his public life. Many of these advices are utterly unworthy the imitation of an ingenuous man, but a few may be taken as illustrative of tact, good sense, and shrewdness :—

State what you censure by the soft names of those who would apologise for it.

In putting a question to your adversary, let it be the last thing you say.

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\* London Correspondent of the "Birmingham Journal."

Distinguish real from avowed reasons of a thing. This makes a fine and brilliant fund of argument.

Upon every argument consider the misrepresentations which your opponent will probably make of it.

If your cause is too bad, call in aid the party : if the party is bad, call in aid the cause.\*

Nothing disgusts a popular assembly more than being apprised of your intentions to speak long.

To succeed in a new sphere a man must take Tact with him. In nine cases out of ten, Method will miss the mark till Tact has taught it adaptation. The House of Commons has often illustrated this opinion. So many things have to be taken into account, that nothing but experience can teach their management. Canning used to say, that speaking in the House of Commons must take *conversation* for its basis ; that a *studious* treatment of topics was out of place. The House of Commons is a working body, jealous and suspicious of embellishments in debate, which, if used at all, ought to be spontaneous and unpremeditated. Method is indispensable. Topics ought to be clearly distributed and arranged ; but this arrangement should be felt in effect, and not betrayed in the manner. But above all things, first and last, he maintained that *reasoning* was the one essential element. Oratory in the House of Lords was totally different. It was addressed to a different atmosphere—a different class of intellects—more elevated, more conventional. It was necessary to be more ambitious and elaborate there.

“ Fellows who have been the oracles of coteries from their birth—who have gone through the regular process of gold medals, senior wranglerships, and double foists—who have nightly sat down amid tumultuous cheering in debating societies, and can harangue, with an unruffled forehead and an unfalter-

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\* “ If neither is good,” adds Hamilton, “ wound your opponent,” which may be parliamentary, but I do not choose to recommend it.

ing voice, from one end of a dinner table to the other—who, on all occasions, have something to say, and can speak with fluency on what they know nothing about—no sooner rise in the House than their spells desert them. All their effrontery vanishes. Commonplace ideas are rendered even more uninteresting by a monotonous delivery ; and, keenly alive as even boobies are, in those sacred walls, to the miraculous, no one appears more thoroughly aware of his unexpected and astounding deficiencies than the orator himself. He regains his seat, hot and hard, sultry and stiff, with a burning cheek and an icy hand—repressing his breath lest it should give evidence of an existence of which he is ashamed, and clenching his fist, that the pressure may secretly convince him he has not as completely annihilated his stupid body as his false reputation.”\*

How admirable a compendium is this of the history of rhetorical blockheads, who think that “in the great arena their little bow-wow” will be taken for “the loftiest war-note the lion can pour,” just as if they were in their own small councils, and clubs, and societies ! D’Israeli is said to have failed in this manner on the Spottiswoode business in the House of Commons ; but afterwards, as the world knows, he achieved brilliant distinction. Tact alone can teach a man to feel his way and measure the men opposed to him—it dictates judgment and effort, or *silence*.

Reputation and fortune are often made by Tact alone. The late Sir William Follett is an example. One of his obituary notices said :—We do not, by any means, mean to say that at any period of his life he could be compared, as a scientific lawyer (to scholarship he had no pretensions at all), to Tindal, Maule, Patteson, Campbell ; or, in the equity courts, to Pepys, Pemberton, or Sugden. Thus his professional position was attributable neither to the superiority of his professional knowledge nor to any talent above his contemporaries. In

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\* “Young Duke,” by D’Israeli.



Parliament he was not to be compared with Plunkett, Brougham, Sir William Grant, or Perceval. He possessed not the strong, eloquent and condensed power of diction, joined to the closest and severest reasoning, of Plunkett ; he had neither the stores of political, literary, and economical information, the versatility, the power of vigorous invective, nor of sarcasm, of Brougham ; the calm, philosophic spirit of generalisation of Grant ; nor had he the dauntless daring and parliamentary pluck of Perceval. It must be admitted that he was neither an orator, nor a man of genius, nor a man of learning, apart from the *specialité* of his profession. He had neither passion, nor imagination of the fancy or of the heart. In what, then, lay his barristerial superiority ? In his capability to play the artful dodge. His greatest skill consisted in presenting his case in the most harmonious and fair purposed aspect. If there was anything false or fraudulent, a hitch, or a blot of any kind in his cause, he kept it dexterously out of view, or hurried it trippingly over ; but if the blot was on the other side, he had the eye of the lynx and the scent of the hound to detect and run down his game. He had the greatest skill in reading an affidavit, and could play the "artful dodge" in a style looking so like gentlemanly candour, that you could not find fault ; and in reading an affidavit on the opposite side, he was cunning of fence.

I do not give this example as imitable, only as illustrative of Tact. Tact so employed may denote a very good lawyer, but a very indifferent man.

Those who had the pleasure of hearing Thom, the weaver poet, converse, know the Spartan felicity of expression which he commanded. His conversation was often a study in rhetoric. He told a story in the best vein of Scotch shrewdness. He was one day recounting an anecdote of Inverury, or old Aberdeen, to a coterie of listeners. The point of the story rested on a particular word spoken in fitting place. When he came to it he hesitated as though at a loss for the term. "What is

it you say under these circumstances," he asked—"not this—nor that," he remarked, as he went over three or four terms by way of trial as each was endeavouring to assist him—"Ah," he added, apparently benevolent towards the difficulty into which he had thrown them, "we say ——," for want of a better word. This, of course, was *the* word wanted—the happiest phrase the language afforded. He gained several things by this finesse—he enlivened a regular narrative by an exciting digression, which increased the force and point of the climax. He created a difficulty for his auditors, for who, when suddenly asked, would be able to find a term which seemed denied to his happy resource? or finding it, would have the courage to present it to such a fastidious epithetist? and he exalted himself by suggesting what appeared out of their power, and excited an indefinite wonder at his own skill in bringing a story to so felicitous an end, by the employment of a *make-shift* phrase. What would he have done if he could have found the right one? was naturally thought. This was tact. It was a case analogous to that given by Dickens in one of his early papers, where the President, at an apparent loss for a word, asks, "What is that you give a man who is deprived of a salary which he has received all his life for doing nothing, or perhaps worse, for obstructing public improvement?"—"Compensation!" suggests the Vice. The case was the same, except that Thom was his own Vice-President.

An instructive lesson in Tact is given in the Preface of Thomas Cooper to his "Purgatory of Suicides." Those who know the variety of historic incidents which crowded for record in his career, wonder at the discretion with which he confines himself to the few which stand at the portal of his majestic poem, to inform you of its origin and design.

## PART II.

## ACQUIRED POWERS.



## CHAPTER VII.

## ORIGINALITY.

ORIGINALITY is reality. In reference to thought it is the conception of the truth of nature, in opposition to the truth of custom.

The material of which Originality is made has been discussed in previous chapters.\* Its manifestation in literature has been well illustrated by the author of "Time's Magic Lanthorn,"† in a dialogue between Bacon and Shakspeare—an extract from which is to this effect :—

"*Bacon.* He that can make the multitude laugh and weep as you do, Mr. Shakspeare, need not fear scholars. A head naturally fertile and forgetive is worth many libraries, inasmuch as a tree is more valuable than a basket of fruit, or a good hawk better than a bag full of game, or the little purse which a fairy gave to Fortunatus, more inexhaustible than all the coffers in the treasury. More scholarship might have sharpened your judgment, but the particulars whereof a character is composed are better assembled by force of imagination than of judgment, which, although it perceive coherencies, cannot summon up materials, nor melt them into a compound with that felicity which belongs to imagination alone.

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\* Logic of Facts, chaps. iv., v.

† A series of papers that appeared in "Blackwood" some years ago.

“*Shakspeare*. My lord, thus far I know, that the first glimpse and conception of a character in my mind is always engendered by chance and accident. We shall suppose, for instance, that I am sitting in a tap-room, or standing in a tennis-court. The behaviour of some one fixes my attention. I note his dress, the sound of his voice, the turn of his countenance, the drinks he calls for, his questions and retorts, the fashion of his person, and, in brief, the whole out-goings and in-comings of the man. These grounds of speculation being cherished and revolved in my fancy, it becomes straightway possessed with a swarm of conclusions and beliefs concerning the individual. In walking home, I picture out to myself what would be fitting for him to say or do upon any given occasion, and these fantasies being recalled at some after period, when I am writing a play, shape themselves into divers mannikins, who are not long of being nursed into life. Thus comes forth Shallow, and Slender, and Mercutio, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek.

“*Bacon*. In truth, Mr. Shakspeare, you have observed the world so well, and so widely, that I can scarce believe you ever shut your eyes. I too, although much engrossed with other studies, am, in part, an observer of mankind. Their dispositions, and the causes of their good or bad fortune, cannot well be overlooked even by the most devoted questioner of physical nature. But note the difference of habitude. No sooner have I observed and got hold of particulars, than they are taken up by my judgment to be commented upon, and resolved into general laws. Your imagination keeps them to make pictures of. My judgment, if she find them to be comprehended under something already known by her, lets them drop and forgets them; for which reason a certain book of essays, which I am writing, will be small in bulk, but, I trust, not light in substance. Thus do men severally follow their inborn dispositions.

“*Shakspeare*. Every word of your lordship’s will be an adage to after times. For my part, I know my own place,

and aspire not after the abstruser studies: although I can give wisdom a welcome when she comes in my way. But the inborn dispositions, as your lordship has said, must not be warped from their natural bent, otherwise nothing but sterility will remain behind. A leg cannot be changed into an arm. Among stage-players, our first object is to exercise a new candidate until we discover where his vein lies."

In this mixture of observation and experiment, original information has its source. But the conventionalisms of society repress its manifestation. Jeffrey, in one of those passages marked by more than his ordinary good sense, has depicted its influence on young men:—

"In a refined and literary community," says he, "so many critics are to be satisfied, so many rivals to be encountered, and so much derision to be hazarded, that a young man is apt to be deterred from so perilous an enterprise, and led to seek distinction in some safer line of exertion. His originality is repressed, till he sinks into a paltry copyist, or aims at distinction by extravagance and affectation. In such a state of society he feels that mediocrity has no chance of distinction; and what beginner can expect to rise at once into excellence? He imagines that mere good sense will attract no attention; and that the manner is of much more importance than the matter, in a candidate for public admiration. In his attention to the manner, the matter is apt to be neglected; and in his solicitude to please those who require elegance of diction, brilliancy of wit, or harmony of periods, he is in some danger of forgetting that strength of reason and accuracy of observation by which he first proposed to recommend himself. His attention, when extended to so many collateral objects, is no longer vigorous or collected; the stream, divided into so many channels, ceases to flow either deep or strong: he becomes an unsuccessful pretender to fine writing, and is satisfied with the frivolous praise of elegance or vivacity."

The Rev. Sidney Smith left on record his opinion of the

influence of conventionality's cold decorum:—"The great object of modern sermons is to hazard nothing: their characteristic is decent debility, which alike guards their authors from ludicrous errors, and precludes them from striking beauties. Every man of sense, in taking up an English sermon, expects to find it a tedious essay, full of commonplace morality; and if the fulfilment of such expectations be meritorious, the clergy have certainly the merit of not disappointing their readers."

Emerson, above all men, has written the philosophy of Originality:—"Insist on yourself," says he, "never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment, with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. The way to speak and write what shall not go out of fashion, is to speak and write sincerely. Take Sidney's maxim: 'Look in thy heart and write.' He that writes to himself writes to an eternal public."



## CHAPTER VIII.

### HEROISM.

WHAT has Heroism to do with Rhetoric? the reader will ask. Much. Courage in one thing, as we are told, does not mean courage in everything. A man who will face a bullet will not face an audience. Heroism is the originality of action.

A cool, easy confidence is the source of daring. "Trust yourself: every heart vibrates to that iron string."\* In one of those papers, rare in "Chambers' Journal," it is remarked:—"There must, at all but extraordinary times, be a vast amount of latent capability in society. Gray's musings on the Crom-

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\* Emerson.

wells and Miltons of the village are a truth, though extremely stated. Men of all conditions do grow and die in obscurity, who, in suitable circumstances, might have attained to the temple which shines afar. The hearts of Roman mothers beat an unnoted lifetime in dim parlours. Souls of fire miss their hour, and languish into ashes. Is not this conformable to what all men feel in their own case? Who is there that has not thought, over and over again, what else he could have done, what else he could have been? Vanity, indeed, may fool us here, and self-tenderness be too ready to look upon the misspending of years as anything but our own fault. Let us look, then, to each other. Does almost any one that we know appear to do or be all that he might? How far from it! Regard for a moment the manner in which a vast proportion of those who, from independency of fortune, and from education, are able to do most good in the world, spend their time, and say if there be not an immense proportion of the capability of mankind undeveloped. (The fact is, the bond of union among men is also the bond of restraint. We are committed not to alarm or distress each other by extraordinary displays of intellect or emotion. There are more hostages to fortune that we shall not do anything great, than those which having children constitutes. Many struggle for a while against the repressive influences, but at length yield to the powerful temptations to nonentity.) (The social despotism presents the fetes with which it seeks to solace and beguile its victims; and he who began to put on his armour for the righting of many wrongs, is soon content to smile with those who smile. Thus daily do generations ripe and rot—life unenjoyed, the great mission unperformed.) (What a subject for tears in the multitude of young souls who come in the first faith of nature to grapple at the good, the true, the beautiful, but are thrown back, helpless and mute, into the limbo of Commonplace.) (O Conventuality, quiet may be thy fireside hours, smooth thy pillowed thoughts; but at what a sacrifice of the right and

the generous, of the best that breathes and pants in our nature, is thy peace purchased !”

Given says Mr. Dawson, a Cromwell or a Milton, and he will make himself felt. But this is the exception. The rule of development requires the condition. Paine confesses that the world (when he first came to America) could not have persuaded him that he should be either a soldier or an author. “If I had any talents for either,” said he, “they were buried in me, and might have ever continued so had not the necessity of the times dragged and driven them into action.”\* He was unconscious of his powers.

There is heroism in trusting yourself to events. That sagacity of which greatness is born, puts its prowess to the test of experiment. In this lies the secret of the hero and the scholar—they do not *guess* their abilities, but *determine* them by enterprise and achievement. They *try*.

My friend Mr. Storer, who was the wag of the Rhetoric class of which we were members when students, communicated to me the subjoined parody. As the soliloquy of a novice it expresses with felicity the young speaker’s doubts and fears :—

To spout, or not to spout, that is the question :  
 Whether 'tis better for a shamefaced fellow,  
 (With voice unmusical and gesture awkward,)  
 To stand a mere spectator in this business,  
 Or have a touch at Rhetoric? To speak—to spout  
 No more; and by this effort, to say we end  
 That bashfulness, that nervous trepidation  
 Displayed in maiden speeches,—'twere a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wished. To read—to speechify  
 Before folks—perhaps to fall;—ay, there's the rub;  
 For from that ill success what sneers may rise,  
 Ere we have scrambled thro' the sad oration,  
 Must give us pause: 'tis this same reason  
 That makes a novice stand in hesitation,  
 And gladly hide his own diminished head  
 Beneath some half-fledged orator's importance,  
 When he himself might his quietus make  
 By a mere recitation. Who could speeches hear,

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\* “Crisis,” No. 6.



Responded to with hearty acclamation,  
 And yet restrain himself from holding forth—  
 But for the dread of some unlucky failure—  
 Some unforeseen mistake—some frightful blunder—  
 Some vile pronounciation, or inflection,  
 Improper emphasis, or wry-necked period,  
 Which carping critics note, and raise the laugh,  
 Not to our credit—nor so soon forgot ?  
 We muse on this ! Then starts the pithy question :  
 Had we not best be mute and hide our faults,  
 Than spout to publish them.

Spout and publish them without hesitation. Had Raphael feared to daub, he had never been Raphael. Had Canova feared to torture marble, he had never been a sculptor. Had Macready feared to spout, he had never been an actor. If you stammer like Demosthenes, or stutter like Curran, speak on. He who hesitates to hesitate, will always hesitate.



## CHAPTER IX..

### PROPORTION.

BOMBAST is inflation ; is turgid, dropsical language—great in parade, little in purport. It has its source in exaggeration, in want of proportion. A child catches at its coral and at the moon with the same expectation of clutching it. He has no idea of distance. The boy cuts a stick or trundles his hoop with as much exultation as the man defeats an enemy or wins his wife. The boy has no notion of relative value. As everything seems equally new, so everything seems equally important to him. This want of measure, innocent and healthy in youth, is the source of bombast in men.

“Man is a strange animal, but that complex animal, a public meeting, is stranger. Its vagaries are surprising, and baffle analysis. It always seems to have more force than sense. Two heads are better than one, but some hundreds of

heads appear to be worse than none. Take any number of men, each of whom would listen to reason, be open to conviction, and resolute to see fair play all round ; compound the honest men of sense in a public meeting, and the aggregate is headstrong, headlong, rash, unfair and foolish. Tell any single man, *totidem verbis*, that there is nobody in the world like him—nobody so lovely and virtuous as his wife and daughters, and he will laugh in your face, or kick you out of doors ; but tell the aggregate man the same of his multitudinous self and family—he will vent an ecstasy of delight in ‘loud cheers.’”\* But only the uneducated imitate this delusion. The time will come when meetings no more than men will tolerate the collective nonsense.

The notorious defence of Thurtell some years since, which was so applauded for effectiveness by a portion of the press, is one of the most offensive exhibitions of vanity and wind-bag eloquence extant. Bombast is the language of vulgarity and villainy. Thurtell ought to have been condemned for his defence had he escaped from the penalty of his crime. Carelessness of assertion and wildness of accusation are to the English people extremely distasteful, as marking either a deficiency of intellect or a want of the love of truth.

Royalty has always been a patient and often a greedy recipient of egregious adulation. The oratory addressed to James I. on his progress through Scotland was of no common cast. Officials who addressed him at the various towns at which he arrived—“put together Augustus, Alexander, Trajan, and Constantine. It was supposed that even the antipodes heard of his courtesy and liberality ; the very hills and groves were said to be refreshed with the dew of his aspect ; in his absence the citizens were languishing gyrades, in his presence delighted lizards, for he was the sunshine of their beauty. At Glasgow, Master Hay, the commissary, when attempting to

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\* “Spectator.”

speak before him, became like one touched with a torpedo, or seen of a wolf; and the principal of the University, comparing His Majesty with the sun, observed, to that luminary's disadvantage, that King James had been received with incredible joy and applause; whereas a descent of the sun into Glasgow would in all likelihood be extremely ill taken. Hyperbole was not sufficient—the aid of prodigies was called—a boy of nine years old harangued the king in Hebrew, and the schoolmaster of Linlithgow spoke verses in the form of a lion.”\*

(The measure of a man's understanding lies in his language. This he inevitably offers to all observers.) Besides just taste being outraged by disproportion, he who is guilty of it loses the power of being impressive. We are told of Dante, whose potent use of words has never been surpassed, that great and various as his power of creating pictures in a few lines unquestionably was, he owed that power to the directness, simplicity, and intensity of his language. In him “the invisible becomes visible,” as Leigh Hunt says—“darkness becomes palpable, silence describes a character, a word acts as a flash of lightning which displays some gloomy neighbourhood where a tower is standing, with dreadful faces at the window.”†

“In good prose (says Frederic Schlegel) every word should be underlined”—that is, every word should be the right word; and then no word would be righter than another. It comes to the same thing, where all words are italics one may as well use roman. There are no italics in Plato, because there are no unnecessary or unimportant words.‡

Declamation, which is assertion without proof, is disproportion in this sense, that it is a dogmatic enunciation, out of proportion with what is known by an auditory who reject the propositions announced. Nearly all Oriental eloquence is declamatory. That 13th chapter of the Corinthians, which

\* Progress and Court of King James the First.—“Quarterly Review.”

† “Athenæum,” No. 1115.

‡ Guesses at Truth.

relates to charity, is a good instance. Paul tells you assiduously what charity is, and that it should be practised, but he does not once tell you why. Perhaps the Orientals are quicker to perceive or less exacting than Europeans, but the want of the reasons was felt among us, and Bishop Hooker supplied them sixteen centuries after.

Precision must be attained at any cost. If we do not master language, says Mr. Thornton, it will master us. An idle word, says the "Daily News," has conquered a host of facts. We must keep watch and ward over words.

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## CHAPTER X.

### STYLE.

ROUSSEAU sways mankind with that delicious might (the power of words) as Jupiter does with his lightnings. This is John Müller's tribute to the style of Rousseau. It has recently been asserted among us, that "Style is, and always has been, the most vital element of literary immortalities. More than any other quality, it is peculiar to the writer; and no one, not time itself, can rob him of it, or even diminish its value. Facts may be forgotten—learning grow commonplace—truths dwindle into mere truisms—but a magnificent or beautiful style can never lose its freshness and its value. For style, even more than for his wonderful erudition, is Gibbon admired; and the same quality, and that alone, renders Hume the popular historian of England, in spite of his imperfect learning, the untrustworthiness of his statements in matters of fact, and the anti-popular caste of his opinions."\* This is not greater praise than I should be inclined to award to masterly style, but this

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\* "Daily News," No. 499.

eulogy has the fault of making style to appear independent of sense. We value Hume for the grace and perspicuity of his narrative, and for those profound reflections which, whether founded on real or fictitious data, are equally full of wisdom. Method, perspicuity, brevity, variety, harmony, are indeed separable from sense, but no combination of such qualities will give life to a book without sense. They are but the auxiliaries of meaning, not the substitutes for it. Gilfillan has happily said, that "the secret of perfect composition is manly wisdom, uttered in youthful language." Youthful language is simple and clear. These are its properties. We are nothing unless we are critical, and we are nothing unless we are clear. That criticism which destroys the power of pleasing must be blown aside, and so must that finesse of style which cannot be understood. Again, the truth is obvious that sense is the despot of style.

The "Dublin University Magazine" lately had this passage:—"Boz has achieved a great thing—he has created a *style*. Perhaps I am wrong to say *created*—a term which implies independence of materials—whereas the singular circumstance in this case is, that by *careful study of previous styles*, by *imitation of them*, by more perhaps than imitation in the first instance, this author has produced out of *the heterogeneous elements* a compound essentially differing from all its component parts, and claiming—claiming justly—the high merit of being *original*. That such a result should follow such a course ought to encourage writers who aim at true celebrity to adopt this humble and pains-taking initiatory system, which though in other arts it has admittedly led to the grandest results (in painting, for instance), in literature has been too much overlooked and despised. Boz now stands alone in his style—he has had no models, he has no imitators, he will probably have no disciples." I should think Dickens has smiled at this violent attempt to make a literary alchemist of him, as one fusing all sorts of styles in his crucible of composition, and

bringing out quite a new mixture. Present society has furnished him with materials ; a patient and an accurate observation has gathered them ; feeling, taste, and humour, have combined them, and an unaffected simplicity has told them. I suspect that a happy nature and good sense have had more to do with Dickens' reputation than any amount of old styles—than Sterne or Sturm. Tindal said of Pitt's first speech, that it was more ornamental than the speeches of Demosthenes, and less diffuse than those of Cicero. That it should have been so often quoted, says Macaulay, "is proof how slovenly most people are content to think. It would be no very flattering compliment to a man's figure to say that he was taller than the Polish Count [or Tom Thumb], and shorter than Giant O'Brien ; fatter than *anatomie vivante*, and more slender than Daniel Lambert. No speaking can be less ornamental than that of Demosthenes, or more diffuse than that of Cicero."

Heldenmaier lays it down as a maxim of education that Freedom is the all-essential condition of growth and power. There can be no fervour while, in the language of Sam Slick, "Talk has a pair of stays, and is laced up tight and stiff." It is freedom which is the active element of all fresh and vigorous style. Dr. Gilchrist observes that, "What one of the ancient philosophers said of laws, may be truly said of rhetorical rules ; they are like cobwebs which entangle the weak, but which the strong break through. The first rule of good composition is, *that the composer be free and bold*. Before a man can be a good thinker, or a good writer, he must be free and bold—he must be roused to noble daring—he must feel his whole soul rising in scornful indignation at the thought of having been for a day a blind follower of blind leaders—a slave of slaves—a member of the herd of creeping, crouching, servile minds. Can servile composers in the harness of rules, dreading the lash of criticism, limping upon quotations with their eye upon precedents, and authorities, create a style at once—new

and striking, yet just and proper? All real greatness is the offspring of freedom: there may be absurdity, folly, cant, hypocrisy, squeamish delicacy, finical politeness, sickly sentimentality, mawkish affectation in every possible fantastic form of fashion and variety; but there cannot be original, substantial excellence without intellectual independence, manly thinking and feeling."

As soon as a man understands a subject he is in a condition, so far as material goes, to write or speak about it. If he has also courage to write *himself* in his word, he may be said to have the materials and the strength to achieve originality. But let him not forget that fulness and freedom are both blind; and that without the lights of taste and perspicuity and brevity he may offend, bewilder, and tire.

Out of all a man may be able to say, taste (by which I chiefly mean a sense of utility) selects the most useful things which pertain to conviction and improvement.

An old woman, who showed a house and pictures at Towcester, expressed herself in these words:—"This is Sir Richard Farmer; he lived in the country, took care of his estate, built this house and paid for it, managed well, saved money, and died rich. *That* is his son; he was made a lord, took a place at court, spent his estate, and died a beggar!" A very concise, but full and striking account, says Dr. Horne. Here clearness and brevity are conspicuous: great qualities to master!

As 'tis a greater mystery in the art  
Of painting to foreshorten any part,  
Than draw it out; so 'tis in books the chief  
Of all perfections to be plain and brief.

Juniper Hedgehog wrote of the Bishop of Exeter:—"What a lawyer was spoiled in that bishop! What a brain he has for cobwebs. How he drags you along through sentence after sentence—every one a dark passage—until your

head swims !” \* Characterising with effect the darkness which prevails where perspicuity is absent.

Brevity and precision are oftener manifested among our French neighbours than among ourselves. The speeches made to mobs—the most hurried placards, abound in the felicities of condensation. Europe has for some time been agitated with communism. Few Englishmen could tell you what is meant by it. Yet nearly a century ago Morelly thus expressed it :—“ It is the solution of this excellent problem : To find a situation in which it shall be nearly impossible for man to be depraved or bad.” We have never on this side the channel approached the felicity of this reply.

As a model of the old, simple, and manly Saxon tongue, the student may consult the writings of the author of the “*Pilgrim’s Progress*.” If all that Mr. Macaulay avers be true, the works of the Bedford tinman deserve special attention. The style of Bunyan, says Macaulay, is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few terms in theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he wanted to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, this dialect of plain working-men, was sufficient. There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language, no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed.

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\* Jerrold’s Shilling Magazine, No. 8. July, 1845.



In the first edition of "Practical Grammar" the author fell into this vagueness. If remarks had to be made at the end of a statement, it was directed that they should be neither "too strong nor too tedious." But when he subsequently asked his class at the City Mechanics' Institution, at what point of effectiveness a man might be said to be *too strong*, it was agreed that there was error somewhere. And the injunction not to be "*too tedious*" was found to imply that we might be tedious in some degree—which hardly seemed desirable. Then it was asked, What is Strength? Some answered, Power. What was Power? Some said, Effectiveness. But it was soon felt that these definitions left us like Swift's definition of style, that it was the use of proper words in proper places. What were proper words and proper places, still remained open questions. So, if power was strength, and strength effectiveness, what was effectiveness was still unknown. It was finally agreed that to be strong was to be just, and to avoid being tedious was to be brief. We, therefore, agreed that "remarks just and brief" were the proper characterisation. For what was just could never be *too strong*, and what was brief could never be *too tedious*. From which we also learned that the secret of the strength of comment lay in just sentiments, and that tedium was the tiresome progeny of prolixity.



## CHAPTER XI

## SIMILES.

PARACELSUS announced what Cogan reiterated, that "it is as necessary to know evil as good; for who can know what is good without knowing what is evil?" This principle of contrast is that upon which truth depends for its development

and effect for its power. It is the principle on which similes are founded.

To preserve peace and to do good is a very old maxim of morality. Feltham thus enforces it :—" When two goats, on a narrow bridge met over a deep stream, was not he the wiser that lay down for the other to pass over him, rather than he that would hazard both their lives by contending? He preserved himself from danger, and made the other become debtor to him for his safety. I will never think myself disparaged either by preserving peace or doing good." This comparison elevates the sentiment, relieves its repetition from triteness, and gives it the freshness of truth.

Paine, whom I have heard Ebenezer Elliot describe as a great master of metaphor, said of a certain body in America, that at the very instant that they are exclaiming against the mammon of this world, they are nevertheless hunting after it with a step as steady as time, and an appetite as keen as death. The immutable insatiableness sought to be characterised is rendered much more evident by these similes. It will be observed that the contrast implied in similes is not absolute ; it is the comparison of a lesser degree with a greater, which marks the idea to be enforced. This is seen in the saying of Dumont to the effect, that " Both the Rolands felt convinced that Freedom could never flourish in France, and spring up a goodly tree, under the shadow of a throne." It is further seen in the remark of Mirabeau, who, when asked to counsel an obstinate friend, answered, " You might as well make an issue in a wooden leg as give him advice." The same principle is observable in the observation of Emerson, at the soiree of the Manchester Athenæum, at which he spoke. Expressing the latent strength of Old England, he said she " had still a pulse like a cannon." The felicity of the simile was perfect. The same person, denoting the freshness of style of Montaigne, said the words, if you cut them they would bleed. The " Cork Magazine" says that the preface of Thomas Davis

to the speeches of Curran is, in some parts, as majestic as the orations which it prefaces ; in others, displaying a wild pathos, which “ strikes upon the ear like the cry of a woman.”

It does not appear to me to be necessary to enter into the usual enumeration of the various figures of speech specially set forth in rhetorics. Under the principle of comparison so wide a range of illustration is included as to be sufficient for the use of the rhetorician. Nothing, we are told, so works on the human mind, barbarous or civilised, as a new symbol. Metaphor is the majestic ground of enforcement, and its occupation is as extensive as its power. It is by this means the poverty of language is enriched by the eloquence of the universe, and the whole of inanimate nature admitted into society with man.—

In Eastern lands they talk in flowers,  
And tell in a garland their loves and cares ;  
Each blossom that blooms in their garden-bowers  
On its leaves a mystic language bears.

Comparisons are implied by phrases. An instance occurs in Newman's works, where he says—“ Heresy did but precipitate the truths before held in solution.” The allusion is chemical, but very happy. Symbols expressed or implied were the weapons of Mirabeau. Contempt for the men-millinery of literature was never more forcibly expressed than in these words of his—“ My style readily assumes force, and I have a command of strong expressions ; but if I want to be mild, unctuous, and measured, I become insipid, and my flabby style makes me sick.” Dumont, a friend of Mirabeau's, recounting his own editorial experience in preserving brevity and a wise directness in his journal, says—“ The most diffuse complained of our reducing their *dropical* and *turgescant* expressions.”

By some comparisons all the power of condensation is realised. Grattan, comparing the Irish Parliament to a departed child, exclaimed, “ I have sat by its cradle and I followed its hearse.” There is here all the grandeur of eloquence and grief.

In the "Auditor," Lord Viscount Barrington was described as a little squirrel of state, who had been busy all his life in the cage, without turning it round to any human purpose. The clearness attained by this simile needs no explanation. Severity can be conveyed with equal ease, as instanced in Judge Haliburton's asseveration, that Humility is the dress-coat of pride.

It is a trite remark that men draw their symbols from those departments of science, or life, with which they are most familiar. The Greeks filled their language with geometrical allusions. Lieut. Lecount, the well known mathematician, having occasion to describe a wound, says—"One of the latest cases was a man with a *round* ulcer, about *two and a half inches in diameter*, on one side of his leg, and an *oval* one, *five inches by two and a half*, on the other side.\*

When Mr. Mould, the undertaker in "Nicholas Nickleby," speaks of Shakspeare, it is as the theatrical poet who was *buried* at Stratford. But it matters not whence the similes are drawn provided they are appropriate. In a sermon preached at Newgate after the escape of Jack Sheppard, the clergyman discoursed to this effect: "How dexterously did he pick the padlock of his chain with a crooked nail—burst his fetters asunder—climb up the chimney—wrench out an iron bar—break his way through a stone wall—make the strong door of a dark entry fly before him—reach the leads of the prison—fix a blanket to the wall with a spike stolen from the chapel—descend to the top of the turner's house—cautiously pass down stairs, and make his escape at the street door.

"I shall spiritualise these things. Let me exhort ye, then, to open the locks of your hearts with the nail of repentance; burst asunder the fetters of your beloved lusts; mount the chimney of hope; take thence the bar of good resolution; break through the stone wall of despair, and all the strong-

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\* "Midland Observer." March, 1844.

holds in the dark entry of the valley of the shadow of death ; raise yourselves to the leads of Divine meditation ; fix the blanket of faith with the spike of the church ; let yourselves down to the turner's house of resignation ; descend the stairs of humility. So shall you come to the door of deliverance from the prison of iniquity, and escape from the clutches of that old executioner the devil, who goeth," etc., etc.\*

The child, when he first learns to speak, will say anything, thinking he accomplishes much in continuing to talk. So with the public speaker when he first commences, and so with the early efforts of the young writer. He knows nothing of symbolic beauty or rhetorical proportion—he does not suspect that there are gaudy images and encumbering ornaments. When he first rises above the level of plain prose, he never knows when to descend to the earth ; and instead of finding an elevation whence he can show his readers a wider landscape and new objects, he thinks he does enough by showing himself.

Prodigality of metaphors, like multitudes of superlatives, confound meaning. "It is an idle fancy of some," says Felton, "to run out perpetually upon similitudes, confounding their subject by the multitude of likenesses, and making it like so many things, that it is like nothing at all."

The general rule to be observed is obvious. When we intend to elevate a subject, we must choose metaphors which are lofty or sublime. If our purpose is to degrade, the similes which sink the subject to contempt or ridicule are proper for employment. These are the two poles of tendency. A member of the Indiana Legislature has said, "Mr. Speaker,—The wolf is the most ferocious animal that prowls in our Western prairies, or runs at large in the forests of Indiana. He creeps from his lurking-place at the hour of midnight, when all nature is locked in the silent embraces of Morpheus ; and ere the

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\* Volume of Trials of Criminals, printed at Leeds, 1809, for J. Davies, by Edward Baines.

portals of the East are unbarred, or bright Phœbus rises in all his golden majesty—whole litters of pigs are destroyed.” Wanting sustainment, these figures end in the ridiculous.



## CHAPTER XII.

### PLEASANTRY.

I OFFER only a few suggestions on this subject. The happiest vein of pleasantry is needed to pen a suitable essay upon it. If men of wit and humour would analyse the sources of their inspirations, pleasantry might be taught as an art. And why not? Recreation is an element of health—a component of human nature—the third estate of life. It ought to have its professors and cultivators.

A comedian went to America, and remained there two years, leaving his wife dependent on her relatives. Mrs. F——t expatiating in the green-room on the cruelty of such conduct, the comedian found a warm advocate in a well-known dramatist. “I have heard,” says the latter, “that he is the kindest of men; and I know that he writes to his wife every packet.” “Yes, he writes,” replied Mrs. F., “a parcel of flummery about the agony of absence, but he has never remitted her a shilling. Do you call that kindness?” “Decidedly,” replied the author, “*unremitting* kindness.” Here the wit turns upon words.

Goodrich relates a converse instance :—“I once heard of a boy, who, being rebuked by a clergyman for neglecting to go to church, replied, that he would go if he could be permitted to change his seat. ‘But why do you wish to change your seat?’ said the minister. ‘You see,’ said the boy, ‘I sit over the opposite side of the meeting-house, and between me and you there’s Judy Vicars and Mary Staples, and half-a-dozen

other women, with their mouths wide open, and they get all the best of the sermon, and when it comes to me its pretty poor stuff.”

“Wit is the philosopher’s quality, humour the poet’s ; the nature of wit relates to things, humour to persons. Wit utters brilliant truths ; humour, delicate deductions from the knowledge of *individual* character. Rochefoucault is witty, the Vicar of Wakefield the model of humour.”\*

English humour is frank, hearty, and unaffected. Irish light as mercury. It sets propriety at defiance. It is extravagant. Scotch humour is sly, grave, and caustic. Surely the analysis of Pleasantry is possible, and its cultivation practicable.

Many persons never think of pleasantry as an agent of relief in exposition, and of effect in many departments of enforcement. Some worry jokes to death. A man who runs after witticisms is in danger of making himself a buffoon. Some speakers are so beset with the love of this display that they virtually announce to their audiences that the smallest laugh would be thankfully received. A degree of wit pertains to all topics. That which lies in our way is that which is relevant.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### ENERGY.

ENERGY is the soul of oratory ; and energy depends on health. Dr. Samuel Johnson, with that strong sense for which he was distinguished, once said, we can be useful no longer than we are well. Of the rhetorician it may as safely be said that he

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\* Bulwer’s Student.

is effective no longer than he is well. A variety of arts may be pursued in indifferent health—feebleness only prolongs execution—in rhetoric it mars the whole work. Even in the matter of efficient thinking health is worth attention. The senses being the great inlets of knowledge it is necessary that they be kept in health. It will be idle to conceal from ourselves that the physical is the father of the moral man. “Morals depend upon temperaments.”\*

The patience necessary for investigation cannot be preserved with impaired nerves. Long-continued wakefulness is capable of changing the temper and mental disposition of the most mild and gentle, of effecting a complete alteration of their features, and, at length, of occasioning the most singular whims, the strangest deviations in the power of imagination, and, in the end, absolute insanity.

It may not be necessary, because Carneades took copious doses of hellebore as a preparative to refuting the dogmas of the stoics, or because Dryden, when he had a grand design, took physic and parted with blood, that the searcher after truth should commence with an aperient; yet it will be useful that some attention be paid to the physiology of the

—————intellect, whose use  
Depends so much upon the gastric juice.

The public well remember the case of an ex-occupant of the woolsack, who, after “six days’ indisposition,” attempted the annihilation of Lord Aberdeen on account of his Scotch Church Bill. The “Times,” with some satire, expressed, in reference to it, much truth. “We recognise the deep interest of the public in Lord B.’s medicine-chest. We pray him to take care of himself for all our sakes. We entirely enter into the feelings of a man who, after suffering six days under dyspepsia, bile, or otherwise, rushes into the House of Lords to avenge

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\* Edward Johnson—Life, Health, and Disease.



upon some minister the disarrangement of his system. The castigation of a Secretary of State is an interesting incident in his disorder, a gratifying palliative of his discomfort ; but it is, after all, in Epsom salts or quinine that the true and only effectual remedy must be found."\*

Perhaps the lowest quality of the art of oratory, but one on many occasions of the *first importance*, is a certain robust and radiant physical health—great volumes of animal heat. In the cold thinness of a morning audience, mere energy and mellowness is inestimable ; wisdom and learning would be harsh and unwelcome compared with a substantial man, who is quite a house-warming. I do not rate this animal life very high ; yet, as we must be fed and warmed before we can do any work well, so is this necessary.† It often happens that you cannot come into collision with opinion without coming into collision with persons. What would Danton have been without his cannon voice. When Mirabeau spoke, his voice was like the voice of destiny. He seemed as if moulded to be the orator of nature. The wise orator will as much attend to the exercise which gives him health, as to the exercise which gives him skill. We go to the oratorio to hear sublime sentiments set to the music of art, we go to the orator to hear them enforced by the music of nature. Oratory is the personal ascendancy of opinion. Without physical fascination it descends to mere eloquence of words. Intellect moves the scholar only. Oratory moves the illiterate to noble deeds.

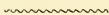
When travelling expenses were the only payment I received for my lectures, I used to walk to the place of their delivery. On my walk from Birmingham to Worcester, a distance of 26 miles, it was my custom to recite on the way portions of my intended address. In the early part of my walk my voice was clear, and thoughts ready—but towards the end I could scarcely articulate, or retain the thread of my discourse. If

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\* "Times," June 29, 1843.

† Emerson.

I lectured the same evening, as sometimes happened, I spoke without connection or force. The reason was that I had exhausted my strength on the way. One Saturday I walked from Sheffield to Huddersfield to deliver on the Sunday two anniversary lectures. It was my first appearance there, and I was ambitious to acquit myself well. But in the morning I was utterly unable to do more than talk half inaudibly and quite incoherently. In the evening I was tolerable, but my voice was weak. My annoyance was excessive. I was a paradox to myself. My power seemed to come and go by some eccentric law of its own. I did not find out till years after that the utter exhaustion of my strength had exhausted the powers of speech and thought, and that entire repose instead of entire fatigue should have been the preparation for public speaking.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### ELOQUENCE. <sup>1</sup>

“THE histories of old times, and even of not very distant ones, acquaint us with the wondrous effects of eloquence upon whole multitudes, carried away to far crusades by the oratory of a hermit; and even upon grave political assemblies and parliaments, which an able speaker could twist, turn, and persuade according to fantasy, so that majorities hung upon his words. There is no such thing now-a-days. Audiences are neither so pliable nor so soft—and eloquence, however mighty, fails in carrying convictions by storm. Perhaps this is the reason why so few public men of the present day fall into the mistake of striving or affecting to be eloquent.

“Persuasion, in fact, is now a long-winded and tedious task. The winning of an audience, of a party—the inculcating an idea, the disseminating it—the winning conviction first, and

getting up the enthusiasm after—is now a slow work, almost like the dropping of a seed, and patiently waiting till it grows, in order to foster it, water it, protect its growth, and enjoy its expansion into the stem and the flower ; such is the political eloquence of modern times. He who discovered it, and who practices it, is—Richard Cobden.”\*

This is a fair history of modern eloquence ; but it is hardly true that Mr. Cobden “discovered” it. He has been its greatest illustrator, but it has grown with the growth and commercial character of the nation. Long before Cobden’s time, the magic fancy of Burke, the glittering sophistries of Pitt, the thundering declamation of Fox, were all alike founded upon the general and lasting truth of things—upon profound views—upon the inexhaustible resources of the understanding. The king of transcendentalists has said that ‘Eloquence must first be plainest narrative or statement ; afterwards it may warm itself until it exhales symbols of every kind, and speaks only through the most poetic forms ; but at first and last it must still be, at bottom, a statement of facts. All audiences soon ask, ‘What is he driving at?’ and if this man does not stand for anything, he will be deserted.”† This writer has given us the most eloquent version of eloquence extant. The substance of his views is as follows :—“First, then, the orator must be a substantial person ; then the first of his special weapons is, doubtless, power of statement—to have the fact and to know how to tell it. Next, is that method or power of arrangement which constitutes the genius and efficacy of all remarkable men. Next to this is the power of imagery. Nothing so works on the human mind, barbarous or civilised, as a new symbol. The power of dealing with facts, of illuminating them, of sinking them by ridicule or diversion of mind, rapid generalisation, humour, wit, and pathos, all these are keys which the orator holds ; yet these foreign gifts are not

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\* “Daily News,” No. 522

† Emerson.

eloquence, and do often hinder a man from the attainment of it. To come to the heart of the mystery, the truly eloquent is, a sane man with power to communicate his sanity. Arm a man with all the talents just enumerated, so potent and so charming, and he has equal power to ensnare and mislead, as to instruct and guide you. A spectacle we may go round the world to see, is a man who, in the prosecution of great designs, has absolute command of the means of representing his ideas, keeps the grasp of a lion on his materials, and the eye of a king to dispose them right, never for an instant light-minded or insane. But, in the great triumph of the orator, we must have something more ; we must have a certain re-inforcing of the man from the events, so as to have the double force of reason and destiny. The eloquent man is not he who has beautiful speech. but he who is inwardly and desperately drunk with a certain belief, agitating and tearing him, perhaps almost bereaving him of the power of articulation. Then it rushes from him, in short abrupt screams, in torrents of meaning. The possession of his mind by the subject is so entire, that it ensures an ardour of expressions which is the ardour of nature itself—and so is the ardour of the greatest force, and inimitable by any art. Add to this a certain regnant calmness, which, in all the tumult, never utters a premature syllable, and keeps the secret of his means and method—and the orator stands before the people, as a demoniacal power, to whose miracles they have no key. Youth should lay the foundation of eloquence, not on popular arts, but on character and honesty. Let the sun look on nothing nobler than he—let him speak for the right—let him not borrow the language of idle gentlemen or scholars, much less that of sensualists, absorbed in money or appetite—but let him communicate every secret of strength and good-will communicated to his own heart, to animate men to better hopes—let him speak for the absent, defend the friendless and defamed, the poor, the slave, the prisoner, and the lost. Let him look upon opposition

as opportunity : he is one who cannot be defeated or put down. Let him feel that it is not the people who are in fault, for not being convinced, but he who cannot convince them. He has not only to neutralise their opposition—that were a small thing—but to convert them into apostles and publishers of the same wisdom.”

The only alteration I would make in this account is this : instead of making eloquence a thing of degree, which confounds eloquence with oratory, I would mark the distinction. Eloquence belongs merely to words, oratory to the passion which fires them. The eloquence of intellect is that of speech, and sense, and symbol ; but the oratory which so seldom greets the ears of men is the eloquence of the man. The philosopher only reaches the scholar—the orator reaches the mob. The philosopher talks the rhetoric of the schools—the orator, the language of nature : he speaks heart words—that language which is wide as the world, which reaches humanity, which all nations understand—which the deaf and dumb can feel—the language of attitude, of gesture—that which moves us on canvass, breathes on marble. It is the burning word of passion. It knows no high, no low, no rich, no poor, no citizen, no alien, no foreigner, no crime, no colour. Savage and civilised, learned and illiterate, (the accidents of condition,) sink into insignificance when *man* speaks to man. The orator penetrates to the equality of humanity. It is in the equality of our common nature that a common purpose originates. He alone who penetrates there inspires unanimity. It is when the multitude are of one opinion that the orator’s power is revealed—that is the seal that nature stamps upon his genius.

It is said that one day when Masillon was preaching upon the Passion before Louis XIV. and all the court, he so affected his hearers that everybody was in tears, except a citizen, who appeared as indifferent to what he heard as to what he saw. One of his neighbours, surprised at such insensibility, reproached him for it, and said to him, “ How can you refrain

from weeping, while we are all bathed in tears?" "That is not astonishing," answered the citizen, "I am not of this parish." The eloquence which I have endeavoured to describe would have included this man, also, in the general weeping. To say—That a touch of nature makes the whole world kin, is only another way of saying—That "man is related to all nature." Eloquence discovers this relation. In the first remark, Shakspeare gives the effect, of which, in the second remark, Emerson has assigned the cause.

With respect to passion, to which much importance has been assigned, it will be useful to remark, that though we must admit, with Lord Kames, that the plainest man animated with passion affects us more than the greatest speaker without it, we must keep in view that the only passion tolerated among us is the passion of conviction. All the rest is, to Englishmen—rant. The passion of conviction is modest, manly, and earnest.



## CHAPTER XV.

### PREMEDITATION.

THERE is every reason to believe that the greatest masters of oratory have been most sensible of the value and have most practised premeditation. It is only the young would-be speaker who expects to be great without effort, or whose vanity leads him to impose upon others the belief that he is so—who affects to despise the toil of preparation. One of the biographers of Canning tells us that it is remarkable, that with his broad sense of great faculties in others, he was himself fastidious to excess about the slightest turns of expression. He would correct his speeches, and amend their verbal graces, till he nearly polished out the original spirit. He was not

singular in this. Burke, whom he is said to have closely studied, did the same. Sheridan always prepared his speeches; the highly-wrought passages in the speech on Hastings' impeachment were written beforehand and committed to memory; and the differences were so marked, that the audience could readily distinguish between the extemporaneous passages and those that were premeditated. Mr. Canning's alterations were frequently so minute and extensive, that the printers found it easier to recompose the matter afresh in type than to correct it. This difficulty of choice in diction sometimes springs from *l'embarras des richesses*, but oftener from poverty of resources, and generally indicates a class of intellect which is more occupied with costume than ideas. But here are three instances which set all popular notions of verbal fastidiousness by the ears; for certainly Burke, Canning, and Sheridan were men of capacious talents; and two of them, at least, present extraordinary samples of imagination and practical judgment, running together neck and neck in the race of life to the very goal.

We owe the low state of oratory in this country to a great extent to the false contempt for "cut and dried speeches," till it has come to be considered a sign of weakness for a man to think before he speaks. Archbishop Whately has wisely cautioned young preachers against concluding that because the Apostles spake well without premeditation, that others will speak so, unless, like the Apostles, they are specially *inspired*.

Perhaps, although we use the term, we never have had oratory in England. There is an essential difference between oratory and debating; oratory seems an accomplishment confined to the ancients, unless the French preachers may put in their claim, and some of the Irish lawyers. Mr. Shiel's speech in Kent was a fine oration; and the boobies who taunted him for having got it by rote, were not aware that in doing so he only wisely followed the example of Pericles, Demosthenes,

Lycias, Isocrates, Hortensius, Cicero, Cæsar, and every great orator of antiquity.\*

It has been said by a popular writer that Demosthenes not only prompts to vigorous measures, but teaches how they are to be carried into execution. His orations are strongly animated, and full of the impetuosity and ardour of public spirit. His composition is not distinguished by ornament and splendour. It is an energy of thought, peculiarly his own, which forms his character, and raises him above his species. He appears not to attend to words, but to things. We forget the orator, and think of the subject. He has no parade and ostentation; no *studied* introduction; but is like a man full of his subject, who, after preparing his audience by a sentence or two, for the reception of plain truths, enters directly on business.

Blair should have said Demosthenes had no *elaborate* exordiums. They were "studied," as is proved by their pertinency and fitness. Demades says that Demosthenes spoke better on some few occasions when he spoke unpremeditatedly. Probably he spoke well in some of these instances, but it was the result of power acquired by premeditation. As a general rule, he who thinks twice before speaking once will speak twice the better for it.

When Macaulay was about to address the House of Commons, his anxious and restless manner betrayed his intention. Still he was regardless of the laugh of the wittings and continued intent on his effort. This is the real courage that does things well—the courage that is neither laughed nor frowned from its purpose.

Macaulay spoke early in the evening before the jarring of the debate confused him, or long attention enfeebled his powers. Only the ignorant despise attention to minute details. When the great Lord Chatham was to appear in public

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\* "Young Duke," by B. D'Israeli.



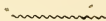
he took much pains about his dress, and latterly he arranged his flannels in graceful folds. It need not then detract from our respect for Erskine, that on all occasions he desired to look smart, and that when he went down into the country on special retainers, he anxiously had recourse to all manner of innocent little artifices to aid his purpose. He examined the court the night before the trial, in order to select the most advantageous place for addressing the jury. On the cause being called, the crowded audience were perhaps kept waiting a few minutes before the celebrated stranger made his appearance ; and when, at length, he gratified their impatient curiosity, a particularly nice wig and a pair of new yellow gloves distinguished and embellished his person beyond the ordinary costume of the barrister of the circuit.\*

Amid the applause in this chapter bestowed upon Premeditation, it would not be just to omit the ridicule with which it has been visited by the Rev. Sidney Smith. "It is only by the fresh feelings of the heart that mankind can be very powerfully affected. What can be more ludicrous than an orator delivering stale indignation and fervour of a week old? turning over whole pages of violent passions, written out in German text ; reading the tropes and apostrophes into which he is hurried by the ardour of his mind, and so affected at a preconcerted line and page, that he is unable to proceed any further." True, "it is only by the fresh feelings of the heart that mankind can be very powerfully affected." But Nature is always fresh—and he who reproduces Nature will always affect. Macready never stabbed his daughter to preserve her honour. Yet every man is moved at his *Virginus*. As *Othello*, Macready's "indignation" at *Iago* is thirty years old, yet we are as much affected by its intensity as on the first day when he displayed it. The speech of *Antony* over the dead body of *Cæsar* was "written in German text" in

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\* Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors.

the days of Elizabeth : it was "cut and dried" two hundred years ago. Yet, whatever our satirical canon may say to the contrary, it ceases not to affect us now. A great idea well expressed, or a deep feeling naturally pourtrayed, is "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."



## CHAPTER XVI.

### REALITY. A

It was said by Panchand, that Mirabeau was the first man in the world to speak upon a question he knew nothing about. But Mirabeau had the confidence which enabled him to abandon himself to the reality of occasions, and he read the lessons they brought with them, while other men went to books ; and, as reality is the most powerful teacher, he was wiser than the encyclopædiasts.

I believe there are no difficulties in the moral or political world, no problem of events, which do not also bring their solutions with them, were we cool enough to read them ; but we never trust ourselves to events—we do not believe what we see, or will not see what is before us. We make preconceived opinions, predetermined judgment, overrule new facts. We too often act the part of the man who is so much in love with his bark that he never ventures to sail in it. This is the course to be taken—scan the truth, and, having learned it, trust to subsequent events to illustrate it.

In the Premeditation which I have commended, I do not mean to exclude extempore application of the faculties. An orator should go to the rostrum to announce conclusions, not to form them. In this I persist ; but having laid the scene, I would leave him free to manage it as he pleased. Let him take advantage of the tide of feeling, temper, and exclama-

tions of the meeting ; but unless he is firm in a previous purpose, these things will take advantage of him, and carry him away from his subject, instead of his carrying away the audience.

*Hic Rhodus ; hic salta.\** Do not wait for a change of outward circumstances ; but take your circumstances as they are, and make the best of them. This saying, which was meant to shame a braggart, will admit of a very different and profounder application. Goethe has changed the postulate of Archimedes, "Give me a standing-place, and I will move the world," into the precept, "Make good thy standing-place, and move the world." This is what he did throughout his life.†

Abandonment to reality is the source of presence of mind—an indispensable element of oratorical greatness. It is storied that Frederick the Great being informed of the death of one of his chaplains, a man of considerable learning and piety, and determining that his successor should not be behind him in these qualifications, he told a candidate about to preach a trial sermon at the Royal Chapel, that he would himself furnish him with a text from which he was to make an extempore sermon. The clergyman accepted the proposition. The whim of such a probationary discourse was spread abroad, and at an early hour the Royal Chapel was crowded to excess. The king arrived at the end of the prayers, and, on the candidate ascending the pulpit, one of his majesty's aids-de-camp presented him with a sealed paper. The preacher opened it, and found nothing written therein. He did not, however, in so critical a moment, lose his presence of mind ; but turning the paper on both sides, he said, "My brethren, here is nothing, and there is nothing—out of nothing God created all things," and he proceeded to deliver an admirable discourse

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\* "Here is Rhodes ; leap here."—*Old Fable.*

† Guesses at Truth. By two Brothers.

upon the wonders of the creation. This man deserved the appointment.

A good converse story is told in Chambers' *Scottish Jest Book* of a minister who had a custom of writing the heads of his discourse on small slips of paper, which he placed on the Bible before him, to be used in succession. One day, when he was explaining the second head, he got a little warm in the harness, and came down with such a thump upon the Bible with his hand, that the ensuing slip fell over the edge of the pulpit, though unperceived by himself. On reaching the end of his second head, he looked down for the third slip; but, alas! it was not to be found. "Thirdly," he cried, looking round him with great anxiety. After a little pause, "Thirdly," again he exclaimed; but still no thirdly appeared. "Thirdly, I say, my brethren," pursued the bewildered clergyman; but not another word could he utter. At this point, while the congregation were partly sympathising in his distress, and partly rejoicing in such a decisive instance of the impropriety of using notes in preaching—which has always been an unpopular thing in the Scotch clergy—an old woman rose up, and thus addressed the preacher:—"If I'm no mista'en, sir, I saw thirdly flee out at the east window, a quarter of an hour syne." It is impossible for any but a Scotchman to conceive how much this account of the loss of thirdly was relished by that part of the congregation which condemned the use of notes.

Before writing or speaking it is of great service to try the matter over, by telling it to a critical friend, or explaining it to some one utterly ignorant of it. By these trials of reality, objections may be learned, impediments to conviction be discovered, and simplicity of enunciation acquired. If you have to speak of topics before thus maturing your power over them, supply a relay of telling points—so that when coherency fails you, you can have recourse to a striking thought. Few will discover its want of relevance. The majority always mistake brilliancy for eloquence. But, remember, this expedient will

only save you with the vulgar, the well informed are not thus to be imposed on.

The neglect of the study of reality is, perhaps, nowhere so apparent as in the construction of controversial books. Authors satisfy themselves with inventing the arguments of their opponents—when the easiest and most satisfactory course is to extract the most powerful reasoning the other side has produced. By this course real objectors could be answered instead of imaginary ones. The neglect of this precaution was strikingly manifested in a work published some time ago entitled “Torrington Hall.”

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### EFFECTIVENESS.

EFFECTIVENESS lies in proportion. Not in the beauty of a pillar or the finish of a frieze, but in the command which the whole building has over the spectator—and not in the brilliance of a passage, but in the coherence of the whole lies the effectiveness of a speech or a book.

Foremost in effectiveness stands purpose. Better say nothing than not to the purpose. Nothing should attract the main attention to itself. The chief merit of any part is its subserviency to the whole design. When parts are praised, a speaker is said to have brilliance—when the whole impresses, he is said to have power.

“The editor of Shelley’s posthumous poems apologises for the publication of some fragments in a very incomplete state, by remarking how much more than every other poet of the present day, every line and word he wrote is instinct with beauty. Let no man sit down to write with the purpose of making every line and word beautiful and peculiar. The only

effect of such an endeavour will be to corrupt his judgment and confound his understanding.”\*

A few generalities may be mentioned, attention to which will conduce to effectiveness. Avoid rant—study simplicity; abjure affectation—be natural. The natural voice is heard the farthest, and the natural affects the soonest. “The costly charm of the ancient tragedy, and, indeed, of all the old literature, is, that the persons speak simply—speak as persons who have great good sense without knowing it.”† Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing. Earnestness and simplicity carry all before them. On Thiers’ first appearance in the French Chamber, he experienced an almost universally unfavourable reception, from certain personal peculiarities, over the effect of which he soon triumphed. In person, Thiers is almost diminutive, with an expression of countenance, though intellectual, reflective and sarcastic, far from possessing the traits of beauty. The face itself, small in form, as befits the body, is encumbered with a pair of spectacles so large that, when peering over the marble edge of the long narrow pulpit, yeleft the tribune, whence all speakers address the Chamber, it is described as appearing suspended to the two orbs of crystal. With such an exterior, presenting something of the ludicrous, so fatal to the effect, especially in volatile France, M. Thiers, full of the impassioned eloquence of his favourite revolutionary orators, essayed to impart those thrilling emotions recorded of Mirabeau. The attempt provoked derision, but only for a moment. In his new sphere, as in the others he had passed through, he soon outshone competition. Subsiding into the oratory *natural* to him, *simple*, vigorous, and rapid, he approved himself one of the most formidable of parliamentary champions.

Bentham has made a wise remark on prolixity, which may

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\* Henry Taylor. Preface to Philip Van Artevelde.

† Emerson.

teach the student a just use in the measure of words. "Prolixity," says Bentham, "may be where redundancy is not. Prolivity may arise not only from the multifarious insertion of unnecessary articles, but from the conservation of too many necessary ones in a sentence; as a workman may be overladen not only with rubbish, which is of no use for him to carry, but with materials the most useful and necessary, when heaped up in loads too heavy for him at once. The point is, therefore, to distribute the materials of the several divisions of the fabric into parcels that may be portable without fatigue. There is a limit to the lifting powers of each man, beyond which all attempts only charge him with a burthen to him immoveable. There is in like manner a limit to the grasping power of man's apprehension, beyond which if you add article to article, the whole shrinks from under his utmost efforts." "Too much is seldom enough," say the authors of "Guesses at Truth." "Pumping after your bucket is full prevents it keeping so."

Proportion of time as well as proportion of parts is essential, both for the sake of the speaker's strength, as well as the hearer's patience. Whitfield is reported to have said, that a man, with the eloquence of an angel, ought not to exceed forty minutes in the length of a sermon, and it is well known that Wesley seldom exceeded thirty. "I have almost always found," says another eminent preacher, "that the last fifteen minutes of a sermon an hour in length, was worse than lost, both upon the speaker and congregation." There is practical wisdom in these remarks. A man who determines to speak but a short time is more likely to command the highest energy for his effort, and to speak with sustained power. Half-an-hour is time enough for immortality. Mirabeau achieved it by efforts of less duration.

Here it may be observed that a man who intends to be brief and comprehensive will seldom need notes to assist him. In cases where time cannot be commanded to master the sub-

ject in the memory, notes are better than the risk of anxiety or forgetfulness. Generally speaking, a subject deeply felt and fully understood will make itself a place in the memory.

The chief quality in the success of the late Sir William Follett, consisted in his confining himself to what he understood. This was the basis on which his tact rested. He knew where his strength lay, and kept there. Of the "Lowell Offering," published by Knight some time since, the "Times" said, "It is the production of factory girls in Lowell—the American Manchester—and we much doubt if all the duchesses in England could write as much and so seldom offend against good taste. The secret of these girls' success in writing arises from their writing only about what they know—common life and their own affairs." He who seeks any kind of effectiveness will do well to remember the incidental lesson conveyed in these words. A frequent cause of failure with young lecturers is neglecting to find a point of common understanding between themselves and their auditors. They do not comprehend the philosophy of exordium. Much rhetorical wisdom may be gathered from the mathematician's example. We know that the geometer would in vain reason with others unless axioms were previously agreed upon for reference. So with an audience. If they do not agree with the speaker as to the premises from which he reasons, the audience have no standard by which they can test his conclusions. Hence, though he may confound them, yet he will never convince them.

It is in this sense that those who would improve the public must "write down" to the public. They may, and they ought, to elevate the public by their sentiments, but they must found their reasoning on what the populace understand and admit, or they reason in vain. The people must be taken at what they are, and elevated to what they should be.

Young men, poetical from ardour, and enthusiastic from passion rather than principle, will often rush from libraries



crammed with lore, with which nobody else is familiar, and pour out before an audience what the speaker believes to be both sublime and impressive, but which his hearers cannot understand. They grow listless and restless, and he retires overwhelmed with a sense of failure. A. B., a young friend of considerable promise, thus failed in my presence. I endeavoured thus to divert his despondency.

“Failures,” I urged, “are with heroic minds the stepping-stones to success.”

“Why have I not succeeded?” he asked—“I can never hope to say better things of my own than I said to-night of others.”

“The cause of your non-success is obvious, you commenced by addressing your auditors as men, and you left them as children.

“A young preacher who had ascended the pulpit with great confidence, but who broke down in the middle of his sermon, was met by Rowland Hill as he was rushing from the pulpit. ‘Young man,’ said Rowland, ‘had you ascended the pulpit in the spirit in which you descend, you would have descended in the spirit in which you ascended.’ Something of this kind will explain your case. In your exordium you should address your auditors as though they were children, state your arguments as though they were learners, and in your peroration only assume them to be men. On the threshold of a new subject men are as children—during its unfoldment they are learners: only when the subject is mastered are they as men with manhood’s power to execute their convictions. Had it struck you that probably no man of your audience was familiar with the habits of society in the days of Spenser’s ‘Faery Queene,’ or of the high and mystic imaginings of the solitary Paracelsus, would not the thought have caused you to recast your whole lecture? Take care that you do not render yourself amenable to the sarcasm of Swift, who when Burnet said, speaking of the Scotch preachers in the time of the civil war, ‘The crowds

were far beyond the capacity of their churches, or the reach of their voices,' Swift added, 'And the preaching beyond the capacity of the crowd. I believe the church had as much capacity as the minister.'"

The error of A. B. became evident to him. It is an error that many perpetually commit. In courts of equity the judges first distinguish by their approval those young barristers who unfold a case with simplicity, and make lucid the points at issue. Auditors are the judges in popular assemblies, and their first applause is bestowed on the clear-headed speaker.

Another source of failure is, that the young lecturer is too little impressed with the wide application of the philosophy of controversy. The discipline of debate should enter into every oration.

It is for this reason that speaking requires to be in some degree verbose. In writing we may be brief, suggestive, and epigrammatic, because each word remains to be pondered over. But that which falls on the ear not being so permanent as that which falls on paper, fullness and many-lighted treatment is indispensable.

The "Encyclopædia Metropolitana" has the following practical synopsis of the leading characteristics which conduce to effectiveness:—"As regards the style which speakers should use for the public, it is clear that a style *too terse* is unintelligible to the majority, while the remedy usually adopted, that of using a prolix and amplifying mode of expression, is repugnant to the public, who never fail to desert a speaker who employs it. The better plan is to use brief and terse sentences, and often repeat the same idea, not by a mere substitution of terms, but by a different arrangement of the members, reversing the premises, or conclusion, etc., never forgetting in the repetition always to use terse sentences. Burke is for this an admirable model.

"While it is always preferable to use short sentences, it

must not be supposed that long sentences are always to be avoided. Long sentences, with a proper arrangement of their members, so that the audience may know what is aimed at, and not be compelled to re-read, or call back to memory, a sentence just uttered, are by no means obnoxious. If they induce trouble, by requiring a second reference, they cause ambiguity, because readers and auditors will not willingly give themselves this trouble. It is a common fault with authors to suppose a clause intelligible, because on *their* reading it appears to suit : but they forget that when they peruse it they know what is coming, which is more than can be expected of an audience. Hence it frequently happens that the best read and the best informed are frequently the worst expounders of their particular subjects of thought and study.

“ In laying before the public any exposition, it is absolutely essential to avoid all nice distinctions that please, and indeed are necessary to a discourse in the closet. The oration is similar to a large picture to be viewed at a distance, where nice lines are unseen, or perhaps annoying, while broad, nay, sometimes vulgar strokes are seen, admired, and, consequently, effective.

“ In preparing for the press, as the style was in the former case reversed from the nicety of an essay, it must be again turned to its original propriety.

“ As regards delivery, it is not advisable to adopt any system of studied action, modulation of voice, or mimicry of others, but merely to thoroughly understand the subject ; and, reading or speaking, according to sense, allow nature to modulate the voice in her own way, which will inevitably be the best.

“ In speaking, it has often been a matter of deep and curious consideration that a person will explain his views to a single individual in such terms as to force conviction in many instances, and where he fails the exposition would be just such a one as would please an audience : it is notorious that what

will not convince one or two will be most effective on many persons : yet while he can succeed in the more difficult task with one or two, when he comes before an audience he is totally abashed, and cannot utter two consecutive sentences with propriety, energy, or sense. An analysis proves this bashfulness to be concomitant with other phenomena : 1st. The increased liveliness of sympathy with numbers ; 2nd. The constant and free operation of this sympathy thus lively throughout the entire audience. The bashfulness of a speaker may therefore be attributable to intricate action and re-action of these several sympathies. There is, 1st, the sympathy of the speaker with the audience ; 2nd, the fact that the speaker knows how each individual sympathises with him ; and 3d, the knowledge of the speaker of the great sympathy existing between all the members of the audience.

“ It is therefore necessary that the speaker should endeavour to lose sight of himself in the audience, and be guided and inspired wholly by the subject, having full confidence in his views, and in the necessary relations of things to render an exposition so attempted perfectly successful. This is the reason that vulgar speakers so frequently succeed. Their very eccentricities and vulgarities show the honesty and earnestness of purpose, and it is that that never fails to prosper.”



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### MASTERY.

It is truly held by great teachers that the most useful lesson the young thinker has to master is to learn one thing at a time. Experience tells us that it is also the most difficult. He is initiated into the art of thinking (power of consecutiveness is the principal sign of this art), who can think of one

thing at a time, and he is *master* of the art who can think of *any* one thing, when he pleases. That which distracts and discourages the young student is confounding the steps of progress with the results and displays of perfection. He confounds the elements of an art with the refinement of its mastery. Let him observe the gradations between incipient efforts and remote excellence, and the perplexity is cleared up, the difficulty surmounted, the discouragement dissipated.

When Dr. Black had a class of young men at the Reform Association, he disciplined them in rhetoric by causing each to marshal his discourse on a chosen theme under certain heads. These once gone over he required these heads to be spoken upon by inversion, beginning probably with the peroration, continuing with the argument, taking afterwards the statement, or other division belonging to the theme, and ending with the exordium. Not until a member could speak equally well on any one head, and in any order, was he deemed master of his subject.

Professor de Morgan, who is considered the greatest of our mathematical teachers, remarks in a paper which he furnished to Dr. Lardner's Geometry, that to number the *parts* of propositions, is the *only* way of understanding them. Indeed all great teachers admit that to identify *details* and grasp the *whole* are the two indices of proficiency.

Margaret Fuller relates how backwoodsmen of America, whom she visited, would sit by their log fire at night and tell "rough pieces out of their lives." This disintegration of events by men strong of will and full of matter, in order to set distinct parts before auditors, is a sign of that power which we call mastery. The ability of the backwoodsman would be natural ability; but all ability is the same in nature, though different in refinement. Ability is, always, power under command.

A barrister will occasionally state a complex case to the jury before him, beginning with the simplest circumstance,

continuing with the more difficult, arranging the facts in such order that the series throw light on the most obscure—that the whole case may be fully understood. When he feels this to be accomplished, he returns, recapitulates, extracts those points that are to have most weight, and puts them before the attention in the most prominent and forcible manner, and, if his brief will afford it, like Fitzroy Kelly, he sheds tears to make his rhetoric pathetic. Without this power of statement, analysis, and enforcement of special facts at will, a man is not master of his subject—his subject is rather master of him.

In learning grammar, the parts of speech have first to be distinguished—nouns, verbs, descriptives. When these can be identified instantly, and in any order—when their signs are evident on cursory inspection, parsing is surmounted. When the inflections of these words are as readily perceived, another stage of progress is ensured. When the subject, attribute, and object of a sentence, are readily known, a third point is attained. There is a natural order of speech—the order of the understanding, the order in which the subject is placed first, the affirmation second, the object last. When these positions can be transposed with ease, and the sense preserved, an additional portion of power is attained. When compound sentences can be broken up into short ones—and distinct fragments of meaning expressed, one by one, the power of perspicuity is acquired. When the different circumstances in any narrative can be taken in at a glance, and the speaker or writer can fix upon those which are most likely to arrest attention and arrange them so as to produce this effect without losing the thread or coherence of truth—the power of impressiveness is reached. After this comes the ability to put short clauses first, longer ones next, and the lengthiest last, so as to fill the ear without marring the meaning or weakening the force. When this can be done, the power of elegance is possessed. When propositions can be stated with perspicuity, supported by cogent facts, and arranged with transpa-

rent method ; when the enunciation is distinct, manly, and sonorous, when similitude or imagery can be introduced, illuminating the subject by the light of wit, sinking it by ridicule or elevating it by symbol, thrilling by pathos, or irresistibly impressing by rapid condensation—when a speaker can employ these weapons at pleasure—holding them at command with the grasp of a lion, and disposing them with the absolute will of a king—he has reached the summit of the rhetorical art ; and if animated with a sublime purpose, may influence, like Demosthenes or Mirabeau, the destinies of men.

Besides these there are other signs of mastery. Whewell thinks that we are never master of anything till we do it both well and unconsciously. But there is no test of proficiency so instructive as that put by George Sand into the mouth of Porpora, in her novel of *Consuelo*. When *Consuelo*, on the occasion of a trial performance, manifests some apprehension as to the result, *Porpora* sternly reminds her, that if there is room in her mind for misgiving as to the judgment of others, it is proof that she is not filled with the true love of art, which would so absorb her whole thoughts as to leave her insensible to the opinions of others—and that if she distrusted her own powers it was plain they were not yet her powers, else they could not play her false. *Porpora* suggested the most instructive sign of mastery. The true love of art, like the perfect sense of duty, casteth out fear. And when study and discipline have done their proper work, failure is impossible : we do not tremble at the result of the trial of our powers, we are rather anxious for the opportunity and quite confident as to the result.

## PART III.

## APPLIED POWERS.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## CRITICISM.

Assuming that the various principles discussed in this treatise are practical and relevant, the application of them to the judgment, to literary and oratorical efforts, will be Criticism. For instance, after what has been said under the head of Effectiveness, the assenting reader will be prepared to pronounce that no work, consisting of many pages, should have detached and distinguishable beauties in every one of them. No great work indeed should have many beauties ; if it were perfect, it would have but one, and that but faintly perceptible, except on a view of the whole. After what has been said in reference to the individuality resulting from Method, the reader of the works of the facetious American satirist, Paulding, will be able to decide to what extent he has the fault, in common with some others, of labelling his characters, gay, sedate, or cynical, as the case may be, with descriptive names, as if doubtful of their possessing sufficient individuality to be otherwise distinguished. If a hero cannot make himself known in his action and conversation, he is not worth bringing upon the boards. The student who coincides with what has been explained relative to Brevity, will on reading such a passage as this—"Nicias asked merely for quarter for the miserable *remains* of his troops *who had not perished* in the Asinarius,



or upon its banks"\*—be at no loss in discovering the superfluous information given, that Nicias asked for quarter for those who "had not perished." No general asks for quarter for those who have. The same writer tells us, that "Discipline yielded to the pressure of necessity. They hurried down the steep in confusion and without order, and trod one another to death in the stream." Necessity is all "pressure," and it is not necessary to specify the essence of a thing as operative. It is needless to tell us that men all "in confusion" "were without order."

When we discover a number of emphatic words employed, we know the writer or speaker has no consciousness of measure. He either has no strength or he does not know where it lies. "When Rigby," says D'Israeli, "was of opinion he had made a point, you may be sure the hit was in *italics*, that last resource of the forcible feeblers."

To tell your feelings on reading a book is one way of criticising its beauties. This rule was suggested to Gibbon on reading Longinus. The appeal to nature is here, as elsewhere, the purest guide.

One can only conceive of Hamlet by tracing out men. Brutus has first to be found in society. He who has never seen the majesty of a noble nature will hardly conceive it well. How can we test the orator's skill, or player's art, but by rules founded by ourselves on observation?

"It belongs," says Schlegel, "to the general philosophical theory of poetry and the other fine arts, to establish the fundamental laws of the beautiful. Ordinarily, men entertain a very erroneous notion of Criticism, and understand by it nothing more than a certain shrewdness in detecting and exposing the faults of a work of art." In the search for the beautiful, he continues—"everything must be traced up to the root of human nature. Art cannot exist without nature, and man can

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\* Mavor's History of Greece, chap. xi.

give nothing to his fellow men but himself. The groundwork of human nature is everywhere the same ; but in our investigations we may observe, that throughout the whole range of nature there is no elementary power so simple, but that it is capable of dividing and diverging into opposite directions. The whole play of vital motion hinges on harmony and contrast.”\*

It would be treason to truth—an affectation of philanthropy—to systematically conceal primary errors, or gloze over influential faults. It will ever be the province of Criticism to notice such in the spirit of improvement. But at length the principle has been established in literature, that perfection is better advanced by the applause of excellence than by the eternal descantation on defects. Human nature has been analysed, and it is found that more is to be gained by appealing to the sentiment of the beautiful than by exciting the horror of deformity. This is now Criticism’s admitted canon—demonstrated beyond the power of prejudice to distort, or of wilfulness to neglect. This principle is not, or should not be, understood as warranting the reviewer in conniving at error, but only as making his chief province to be the genial recognition of artistic truth. Criticism still keeps watch and ward in the towers of Truth, that no enemy from the camps of Error shall steal into its dominions ; but it is ever anxious to welcome and to admit all followers of Progression, even though they may not exactly possess society’s accredited passport.

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\* Dramatic Art and Literature, chap. i.

## CHAPTER XX.

## DEBATE.

DEBATE is a great advantage, and when you win a sincere and able man to discuss with you, enter upon the exercise with gratitude. Your opponent may be the enemy of your opinions, but he is the friend of your improvement. The more ably he confronts you, the more he serves you, if you have but the wisdom to profit by it. The gods, it is said, have not given to mortals the privilege of seeing themselves as others see them—but, by a happy compensation in human affairs, it is given to candid friends to supply what fate denies: and though candour does not imply infallibility, it always includes instruction—it affords that indispensable light of contrast which enables you to discover the truth if hidden from you, or to display the truth if you possess it.

A good writer, says Godwin, must have that ductility of thought that shall enable him to put himself in the place of his reader, and not suffer him to take it for granted, because he understands himself, that every one who comes to him for information will understand him. He must view his phrases on all sides, and be aware of all the senses of which they are susceptible. But this facility can nowhere be so certainly acquired as in debate, which is evidently a discipline as serviceable to the writer as to the speaker.

All investigation should commence without prepossession, and end without dogmatism. Each disputant should be more anxious to explain, than to defend, his opinion.

As an established truth is that which is generally received after it has been generally examined in a fair field of inquiry, it is evident that though truth may be discovered by research, it can only be established by debate. It is a mistake to

suppose that it can be taught absolutely by itself. We learn truth by contrast. It is only when opposed to error that we witness truth's capabilities, and feel its full power.

Oral investigation claims especial attention, because, to a great extent, it ensures that its results shall be carried into practice. The pen develops principles, but it is the tongue that chiefly stimulates to action.

Discussion after public addresses would be of great public value. The discipline, to both speaker and hearers, would be greatly salutary. The argument against it, that it would lead to strife and discord, is the very reason why it should be practised. Men are very childish intellectually, while in that state in which debate must be prohibited. If they be children, train them in the art of debate until they are translated into men.

To admit debate after an address, it is said, enables factious individuals to destroy the effect of what has been said. When unanimity of opinion comes, discussion will fall into disuse, but till it does come (and debate alone can bring it) discussion must be borne. It is the fault of the lecturer if any one is able to destroy the effect of his lecture.

As a general rule, discussions set and accidental, are good. A twofold reality by their means is brought to bear on the public understanding, more exciting than that of any other intellectual agency. An opinion that is worth holding is worth diffusing, and to be diffused it must be thought about; and when men think on true principles they become adherents—but only those adherents are worth having who have thought on *both* sides, and discussion alone makes them do that well. True, men may *read* on both sides; but it seldom happens that men who are impressed by one side care to read the other. In discussions they are obliged to hear both sides. If men do read both sides, unless they read a "Discussion," they do not find all the facts on one side specially considered on the other. In a discussion read, unless read at one sitting, the

strength of an impression and the clearness of the argument on one side is partly lost before the opponent's side is perused. But in an oral debate, the adaptation of fact to fact is complete as far as it perhaps can be—the *pro* and *con* are heard successively, the light of contrast is full and clear, and both sides are weighed at the same time, when the eye is sharply fixed on the balance. It matters not whether the disputants argue for victory or truth. If they are intellectual gladiators, so much the better. The stronger they are, the mightier the battle, and the more instructive the conflict. It is said that people come out of such discussions as they go into them, that the same partisans shout or hiss on the same side all through. This is not always true, and no matter if it is. The work of conviction is often done, though the audience may not show it. They may break your head, and afterwards own you were right. Human pride forbids the confession, but change is effected in spite of pride. But if an audience remain the same at night, they will not be the same the next morning. I rather like to contemplate that conviction which is *begun* in discussion, not *ended* there. He who hastily changes is to be suspected of weakness or carelessness. The steady and deliberate thinker, who takes time to consider, is the safest convert.

If you invite opposition, do it with circumspection. Never debate for the sake of debating. It lowers the character of debate. The value of free speech is too great to be trifled with. Seek conflict only with sincere men. Concede to your opponent the first word and the last. Let him appoint the chairman. Let him speak double time if he desires it. Debate is objected to as an exhibition in which disputants try to surprise, outwit, take advantage of, and discomfit each other. To obviate this objection, explain to your opponent the outline of the course you intend to pursue, acquaint him with the books you shall quote, the authorities you shall cite, the propositions you shall endeavour to prove, and the concessions

you shall demand. And do this without expecting the same at his hands. He will not now be taken by surprise. He will be pre-warned and pre-armed. He will have time to prepare, and if the truth is in him it ought to come out.

If you feel that you cannot give all these advantages to your opponent, suspect yourself and suspect your side of the question. Every conscientious and decided man believes his views to be true, and if consistent he believes them to be impregnable. Neither in minutes, months, nor years, are they to be refuted. Then a man so persuaded may despise petty advantages, and enable his opponent to arm himself beforehand.

In another particular, discussions were esteemed unsatisfactory. When statement and reply have been made, then came the reply to the reply, and then the reply to that, till the cavil seemed endless, perplexing, and tiresome.

Now the object of discussion is not the vexatious chase of an opponent, but the contrastive and current statement of opinion. Therefore endeavour to select leading opinions, to state them strongly and clearly, and when your opponent replies, be content to leave his arguments side by side with your own, for the judgment of the auditors. In no case disparage an opponent, mis-state his views, or torture his words, and thus, for the sake of a verbal triumph, produce lasting ill-feelings. Your sole business is with *what* he says, not *how* he says it, nor *why* he says it. Your aim should be that the audience should lose sight of the speakers, and be possessed with the subject—and that those who come the partisans of persons shall depart the partisans of principles. The victory in a debate lies not in lowering an opponent, but in raising the subject in public estimation. Controversial wisdom lies not in destroying an opponent, but in destroying his error—not in making him ridiculous so much as in making the audience wise.

Debate requires self-possession—a power to think on your

legs. But even in debate, the victory is oftener with the fore-gone than with the impromptu thinker. A man who knows his subject well will be forearmed. He alone can distinctly see the points in dispute, and the nature of the proof or dis-proof necessary to settle the question.

At the threshold of controversy it is well to define all leading terms, which should never be used in any other than the settled sense. A common standard of appeal should be agreed upon. The question at issue should be stated so clearly that it cannot possibly be misunderstood. No opponent should be accepted whose sincerity you cannot assume, as it must never be questioned in debate. Find no fault with his grammar, manner, intentions, tone, whatever may be the provocation. Attend only to the matter. Hear all things without impatience and without emotion. Let your opponent fully exhaust his matter. Encourage him to say whatever he thinks relevant. Many persons believe in the magnitude of their positions, because they have never been permitted to state them to others—and when they have once delivered themselves of their opinions, they often find for the first time how insignificant they are. There are some persons whom nobody can confute but themselves. When you distinguish such, your proper business is to let them do it. Learn to satisfy yourself and to present a conclusive statement of your opinions, and when you have done so, have the courage to abide by it. If you cannot trust your statement to be canvassed by others—if you feel anxious to add some additional remark at every step—if reply from your opponent begets reply from you, suspect your knowledge of your own case and withdraw it for further reflection. Master as completely as you can your opponent's theories, and state his case with the greatest fairness, and, if possible, state it with more force against yourself than your opponent can. The observance of this rule will teach you two things—your opponent's strength or weakness, and your own also. If you *cannot* state your opponent's case

you do not know it, and if you do not know it you are not in a fit state to argue against it. If you *dare not* state your opponent's case in its greatest force, you feel it to be stronger than your own, and in that case you *ought not* to argue against it.

The course here suggested will be as useful to truth as to the disputant. Great prejudice may often be disarmed by thus daring it. In this manner Gibbon delivered his argument in favour of an hereditary monarchy. "Of the various forms of government which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that, on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity! Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master." We often hold by an opinion from the belief that those who dissent from it do not know its full bearings as we do, or they would be of our opinion too: but when, as in the case of Gibbon, we are instructed that our opponent perfectly understands our case, and states its strongest points, we feel that justice has been done to us, and we are the more disposed to acquiesce in an adverse judgment, come to after we have been fully heard.

What Dr. Paley has delineated with respect to a written controversy is not inapplicable to an oral debate. The fair way of conducting a dispute is to exhibit one by one the arguments of your opponent, and with each argument the pre-



cise and specific answer you are able to give it. If this method be not so common, nor found so convenient as might be expected, the reason is, because it suits not always with the designs of a writer, which are no more perhaps than to make a *book*; to confound some arguments, and to keep others out of sight; to leave what is called an impression upon the reader, without any care to inform him of the proofs or principles by which his opinion should be governed. With such views it may be consistent to despatch objections, by observing of some "that they are old," and, therefore, like certain drugs, have lost, we may suppose, their strength; of others, that "they have long since received an answer;" which implies, to be sure, a confutation; to attack straggling remarks, and decline the main reasoning, as "mere declamation;" to pass by one passage because it is "long-winded," another because the answerer "has neither leisure nor inclination to enter into the discussion of it," to produce extracts and quotations, which, taken alone, imperfectly, if at all, express their author's meaning; to dismiss a stubborn difficulty with a "reference," which, ten to one, the reader never looks at; and, lastly, in order to give the whole a certain fashionable air of candour and moderation, to make a concession or two which nobody thanks him for, or yield up a few points which it is no longer any credit to maintain.

It will be evident that this minuteness of reply could not be undertaken without reference to the importance of the question at issue and the abilities of the opponent. Such elaborate pains belong only to great occasions.

It is not necessary always to demonstrate the validity of a given position. To show the impotence of the opposite is often quite sufficient.

It is recorded in the historical memoirs of Curran, that his general practice as a lawyer, when engaged for the defence, was rather to rely on the weakness to which he could reduce

the case of his opponents than on the strength of his own, except on very peculiar occasions.

Be very careful of generalisation—utter no wholesale censure. It will nearly always be wrong. Classify the partisans of opinions which you confute. You will reduce your opponents, and gain in justice and force ; for when you confound objectors together, you outrage all and convince few. If you *can* distinguish classes, address but one class at a time.

Upon the general rules proper for conducting a debate it is hardly possible to enter. Even public meetings in this country are conducted on the crudest principles. If men were commonly intelligent, and many were disposed to take part in public meetings, it would be impossible that any business could be transacted under several days. The assumption that *every* man has a right to be heard, could not be acted upon if half who usually attend public meetings were to enforce that “right.”

When a speech or lecture is debated, each disputant expects to occupy the same time as the speaker, which often prevents more than one being heard in reply. But a short time for several might be fixed, and thus combine discipline with disputation. Brevity of time would induce directness and brevity of speech—it is not the work of any one speaker, but the work of many to attack the whole lecture, and each should select a leading point, and ten minutes would afford time for a very effective objection, if one could be raised.

At public meetings, where many opposing parties often struggle to be heard, confusion, delay, and ill-feeling might be obviated, by each party pre-appointing a representative of ability, in whom confidence could be reposed to speak on their behalf, and by those calling the meeting being made acquainted with, and consenting to the arrangement, the views of half-a-dozen parties could be advocated, where the views of one are heard but inadequately and impatiently new.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## LAWS OF PERSONALITIES.

THE first problem that has to be solved by the people is one of fraternisation. If we wait till unity of opinion on all points is generated before we co-operate together, reforms will be delayed for ages. The only mode whereby public success can be achieved in our day is by the union on general points, of men differing on infinite particulars. But personalities constitute a serious danger. The only way to disarm them is to brave them. To court personalities is fatal to union ; to shun them, fatal to reputation. The friends of a cause ought to be able to dare all opinions. And all opinions might be dared by those in the right. There can be no quarrel unless *two* parties engage in it. And it is always in the power of one party to prevent it by refusing to be a party to it. No man can quarrel with another without that other's consent. Hence the veto of peace and amity is always in the hands of one of the disputants. It is often a duty to notice individual error. It is often indispensable. But the execution of such a duty would not be so distasteful to the public as it now is, were it not for the unskilful manner in which it is generally done. If, when objections to a public man must be made, if they were well selected, and singly urged, without ill-will, and when once presented left as a public warning, the practice would be felt to be useful and tolerable. Instead of this course, a miscellaneous fire is extended to every imaginable peccadillo, and conjectures called in when facts are exhausted, until what was, or should be, intended as a public lesson, becomes a gratification of private resentment. When retaliation usurps the desire to improve another, the contest sinks into personalities.

I have often sent pupils out together in pairs to talk, with

all deliberation and caution, and to note how many expletives they employ, how many errors they commit, how insequential are their thoughts, and how inexact their language. Indeed, how few men have disciplined themselves in these respects! How few ready, florid writers, or speakers, are precise! How few men have the power of being coherent! How much is said which is never meant, even by those who are most careful! How few ever acquire the habit of thinking before they speak! Passing from common life, let the experience of the bar and the closet be heard. Does not the shrewd lawyer, whose whole life is one long laborious study of accuracy, perpetually find the Act of Parliament, upon which many have laboured, open to three or four interpretations? And does not the philosopher daily regret the vagueness of human language? Then on what principle of good sense can we, without most patient deliberation, hurl at each other obnoxious epithets?

What eloquence is more touching than that of a simple tale of actual wrong? The very absence of passion gives it force. The dispassionateness of its relation infuses the air of truth. The presence of passion leads us to suspect the partisan, and invective is felt to be the twin brother of exaggeration. Strength is always calm in battle. Truth imparts repose—the suffrage of mankind is always on the side of dignity. Disputants instinctively bear out the truth of all this. When a man feels that he has a strong case, we have therefore no excitement, no self-retained verdict. A man who thinks he has a clear case, always feels he may safely leave it to the judgment of others. No barrister makes a long speech to the jury when the evidence is all on his side. Fitzroy Kelly never sheds tears except when he has a Tawell to defend.

All which should be done for the adjustment of a difference is, that a man should quietly understate his case—that he should make no material assertion unaccompanied by the proof, that he should make the fairest allowance for his rival's excite-

ment, put the best possible construction on his words and acts, and leave the matter there. All whose suffrages are worth having will make the proper award on his side, without further trouble on his part. The reason of so many departures from this rule is the want of courage or the want of sense. It is a common opinion, that if a man does not bluster and retort, that he is deficient in spirit. It is this apprehension which betrays weak men into violence, and to prove themselves independent they become rude and insolent, and mistake the part of the bravo for that of the hero. But a man of disciplined intelligence knows that courage always pursues its own resolute way without noise or ostentation, firmly preserves its independence, stands immoveable in frankness and kindness, corrects misrepresentation, repairs any injury it may have done, silences slander with the truth, and goes on its way. No wise man answers a fool according to his folly. He shows that it is folly, and abandons it to die by its own hands.

A few years ago, a couple of Dutchmen, Von Vampt and Van Bones, lived on friendly terms on the high hills of Limestone. At last they fell out over a dog. Von Vampt killed Van Bones' canine companion. Bones, choosing to assume the killing to have been intentional, sued Vampt for damages. They were called in due time into court, when the defendant in the case was asked by the judge whether he killed the dog. "Pe sure I kilt him," said Vampt, "but let Bones prove it." This being quite satisfactory, the plaintiff in the action was called on to answer a few questions, and among others he was asked by the judge at what amount he estimated the damages. He did not well understand the question, and so, to be a little plainer, the judge inquired what he thought the dog to be worth? "Pe sure," replied Bones, "the dog was worth nothing, but since he was so mean as to kill him, he shall pay de full value of him." How many suits have occupied the attention of courts—how many contests have engaged the time of the public, and have been waged with virulence and invective,

having no more worthy difference than that of Von Vampt and Van Bones !

At every step, however, we are admonished how conscientiously a man can be in the wrong. Many enter the quagmire of recrimination as a matter of duty rather than taste. The question is commonly put, "Ought we not to state all we know to be true?" I answer, no ; unless it can be shown to be useful. Every man knows a thousand things which are true, but which it would advantage nobody to hear. When we essay to speak, the rule is imperative that we speak the truth, absolutely and truly the truth, if one may write so paradoxically ; but of *what* truth we will communicate, good sense must be the judge—utility the measure. If all truth must be published without regard to propriety, William Rufus, who drew a tooth per day from a rich Jew's head, to induce him to tell where his treasures were concealed, was a great moral philosopher. "Well, but what a man believes to be true and useful may he not state?" will be inquired of me. I answer, no ; unless he can *prove* it. If every man stated his *suspitions*, no character would be safe from aspersion—society would be a universal school for scandal. Suspicion is the food of slander. What public man is at this hour safe from it ? There is already more actual evil in existence than the virtuous are likely soon to correct ; and little necessity exists for suspicion to supply hypothetical cases. "But to bring the question to the point," observes the reader, "if two disputants have respectively 'proved' the fitness of the epithets they have mutually applied, are they not justified in having used them?" I answer, avoid it as often as possible. It is the complainant usurping the province of the jury and the judge. It is the vice of controversy, that each disputant will unite the offices of witness, jury, and judge, give his own evidence, return his own verdict, and pronounce the sentence in his own favour. A function which no man would tolerate in a court of justice, every controversialist exercises with an

inflexible will. It is this which has been the real "disgrace" of religious, political, and literary discussions. That precaution which the wisdom of the lawyer has taken against human frailty, is not lightly to be set aside. Lawyers are the philosophers of disputes, and have wisely taken out of the hands of interest, petulance, and passion the power of deciding upon their own case. Yet disputants will do that unhesitatingly, with regard to each other, which in a court of justice would long engage the anxious and earnest attention of twelve uninterested, dispassionate, and patient men.

The first principle which should actuate all human intercourse, public or private, is that of aiming at the improvement of each other. This neither passion nor interest should obscure. Yet how often do men come into the field, not as true friends who have differences to adjust, but as adversaries bent on each other's destruction? Those who would decry a duel in the usual way, will yet fight a duel on paper. We have nothing to do with our neighbour as his evil genius—we ought, like Rudolph, to be the Providence of our friends. The people boast how far they are in advance of the Government, but in respect of etiquette they are far behind. Even despotic states admit, in theory, that the punishment of criminals is in itself indefensible malignity—that only so far as the brute ignorance of others renders it necessary as an example, ought it ever to be attempted. The improvement and not the mortification in person or character is that at which jurisprudence and well understood justice now aim. Disagreement is a contingency of human nature, from which it will never be freed until men are cast in one monotonous mould. Differences are in themselves as natural and as innocent as variation in form, colour, or strength. It is the manner in which those who differ seek to adjust their differences, that constitutes any disgrace there may be in any case. Unless we have prated of philosophy in vain, we ought never to take up arms against an enemy without at the same time keeping his welfare in

view, as well as our own defence. Before the genius of this aphorism, the prosaic commonplaces of life dissolve. Man rises to nobility. To consult the welfare of friends is kind, obliging, amiable; but the publicans do even the same. To promote the welfare of enemies—to do good to those who hate us—is generous. Higher than Brutus, we walk the platform with Coriolanus. Our true business is not with good and bad men, but with fair or unfair, right or wrong conduct. We ought never to disparage, never to impute evil intentions, and in the strongest cases leave the way open for explanation and reconciliation. We may be firm and yet fraternal—manly and yet kind!

Locke called his opponents “irrational,” Addison “miscreants,” Dr. Clarke “crazy,” Paley “insane,” and Sir Walter Scott makes Sir Everard Waverley class “rakes, gamblers, and *Whigs*” together. These are the mere expletives of polemical and political partisanship—the commonplace effervescences of passion—old as ignorance, universal as vulgarity. They have no novelty—no originality. The elegant contrast of controversy lies in contrast of argument—this is ever fresh and instructive. All recrimination being common to both disputants, will in time, like the common quantities in an algebraic equation, be struck out of disputes—as only making more difficult the finding of the true result. If any epithets are retained in use, they will be confined to error rather than showered on the erring, and the limit of their application will exclude personal disparagement.

Our Reformers disagree not about reforms, but modes of advocacy. I think it can be shown that our Government seldom, if ever, pass laws against purpose, but against extravagance of language, in which passion, or hate, or unskilfulness, express that purpose. Passion and hate may be founded in sincerity but not in wisdom; and were men rhetorically wiser, they might aim at more and accomplish more than they now can.

It admits of demonstration that the progress of reform is



mainly hindered among us by a few metaphysical mistakes. The diatribes respectively hurled by rich and poor against each other arise in an error of generalisation. Both mean the truth, but they express more than the truth, and out of this error come division and ill-will.

Generalisations in science have to be stated circumspectly and with qualification. A generalisation finds a resemblance in perhaps one point only, and that resemblance probably in only the majority of a class. If you accuse in exact language a class of stones possessing a certain property, which is not possessed by all, the exceptional stones will not be scandalised as the same number of men would, whom you happened to include in a carelessly-worded, disparaging, general assertion. It is of no use that you say to the person whom you have wrongly accused—"O, I did not mean you; I meant to allow that there were exceptions." Men naturally suspect that he who is incapable of speaking with accuracy is incapable of thinking with accuracy, and if they acquit you of incapacity, they convict you of carelessness.

Facts make up accusative propriety; and if the facts are not absolutely universal, and with grades of human character they never are, the application of accusation must always be *special*.

It is a wise maxim in jurisprudence that ten guilty men had better escape than that one innocent man should suffer. So with rhetorical and public judgments. The one innocent man condemned will do both judge and justice more harm than the ten guilty who escape.

Men live on good opinion to a great extent. When, therefore, you take away a man's good name, you take away that which is, in many cases, the basis of self-respect. In the advocacy of a good cause, then, let us beware how we proceed with personalities, lest we undo in one direction what we seek to do in another.

A. de Morgan, in his reply to Sir W. Hamilton, in their recent discussion on the origination of Formal Logic, makes

these useful remarks :—“ In the day of swords, it was one of the objects of public policy to prevent people from sticking them into each other’s bodies on trivial grounds. We now wear pens ; and it is as great a point to hinder ourselves from sticking them into each other’s characters, without serious and well-considered reasons. To this end I have always considered it as one of the first and most special rules, that *conviction of the truth of a charge is no sufficient reason for its promulgation*. I assert that no one is justified in accusing another *until he has his proof ready* ; and that in the interval, if indeed it be right that there should be any interval, between the charge and the attempt at substantiation, all the leisure and energies of the accuser are the property of the accused.”

Thomas Cooper, D. D., Bishop of Winchester, in 1589, issued a pamphlet with this title :—“ An Admonition to the People of England : wherein are answered, not onely the slaunderous vntruethes, reproachfully vttered by Martin the Libeller, but also many other Crimes by some of his broode, objected generally against all Bishops, and the chiefe of the Cleargie, purposely to deface and discredite the present state of the Church.”

Even the Bishop of Exeter would not now, in 1849, think of inditing such a title page against his most decided opponents. It is not that truth and falsehood, or right and wrong, have changed ; but that good taste and private justice are in the ascendant. We no longer (in good society) attack the motives, but the principles of men.

Let us apply the rule we have been illustrating to Parliamentary controversies. If every member were to say what is true, or what he believes to be true, of another, our legislative assemblies would soon come to resemble those of the United States, in one of which, not long ago, a member in audience being tired in listening to the member in possession of the house, got up and said, “ Mr. Speaker, I should like to know how long that there blackguard is to go on tiring me to death

in this manner?" The Irish House of Commons, before the Union, furnishes a specimen of what must happen, if sentiments are to be expressed without rule: "I will not call him *villain*, because he is chancellor of the exchequer; I will not call him *liar*, because he is a privy counsellor; but I will say of him, that he is one who has taken advantage of the privilege of this house, to utter language to which in any other place my answer would have been a blow." Such were the expressions used by Mr. Grattan towards Mr. Corrie; and a duel was the immediate result. We endeavour to keep clear of this blackguardism; not because it is unimportant whether a man lies or not, but because we have learned the good sense of not impugning integrity upon suspicion, and when we can impugn it on fact, we need no harsh words—the fact is the severest judgment.

De Morgan, whom I have just quoted, relates that the late Professor Vince was once arguing at Cambridge against duelling, and some one said, "Well, but, Professor, what could you do if any one called you a liar?" "Sir," said the fine old fellow in his peculiar brogue, "I should tell him to pruv; and if he did pruv it, I should be ashamed of myself; and if he didn't, *he* ought to be ashamed of himself."

The obvious laws we should impress on all who controvert, seem to be these:—

1. To consult in all cases the improvement of those whom we oppose, and to this end argue not for our gratification, or pride, or vanity, but for their enlightenment.

2. To invert the vulgar mode of judgment, and not, when we guess at motives, guess the worst, but adopt the best construction the case admits.

3. To distinguish between the personalities which impugn the judgment, and those that criminate character, and never to advance accusations of either kind without distinct and indisputable proof—never to assail character on suspicion, probability, belief, or likelihood.

4. To keep distinct the two kinds of personalities, never mixing up those which pertain to character with those which pertain to judgment.

5. To never meddle with either, unless some public good is to come out of it. It is not enough that a charge is true, it must be *useful* to prefer it before a wise publicist will meddle with it.

6. To dare all personalities ourselves—to brave all attacks—to defy the judgment of mankind, and when we are assailed, unflinchingly to respect ourselves, and keep in view the betterance of him whom we oppose, rather than our own personal gratification.\*

Were the errors discussed in this chapter confined to the vulgar, we might confide in the spread of ordinary intelligence to dissipate them. But it is otherwise. Who would have expected to have found the "sweetest and most genuine poetess of the age," C. B., writing in the *Athenæum* a letter of anger, reproach, and condemnation, of Mr. Howitt, for having written something which she confesses she had "never read." Literary etiquette seems to have received no improvement with time. Hazlitt, Byron, Southey, and other luminaries of literature, sink to the level of the meanest of mankind when they are found engaged in the adjustment of their differences. When turning over the periodicals of their times, one is amazed at the flood of vituperation, the envy, jealousy, and miserable disparagement of each other. Yet if all this littleness exists, better that it be expressed that one may see what our gods are made of. Rudeness is healthier than hypocrisy, and, therefore, the policy which conceals rankling malignity is more pernicious than the display of it. Let it be avowed until men are convinced that it is unreasonable. Leigh Hunt has the credit of having prophesied long ago that the old philosophic

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\* For an enlarged consideration of this question see articles (Nos. 20 and 24 of the "People's Press"), entitled the "Philosophy of Personalities," where I have treated of their introduction into public parties.

conviction would revive among us as a popular one, that re-  
crimination, denouncements, and threats, should be put an end  
to, and the perception prevail that the errors of mankind arise  
rather from the want of knowledge than the defect of good-  
ness. But what is the history of modern parties? Has not  
recriminative error broken up the best of them into miserable  
sections? "Stupidity" can be informed, "ignorance" can be  
enlightened, but the "collision of interest and passion, and  
the perversities of self-will and self-opinion" destroy all before  
them. What hope is there of the improvement of the unedu-  
cated, while those who should know better perpetuate the  
infectious example? Men, whose names it is needless to cite,  
and whom, prior to experience, I could not have believed to  
be unconscious of the fact, I have found unaware that simpli-  
city in the expression of passion is the lesson of nature and of  
genius, and the greatest discovery of rhetorical experience.  
It is, however, clear that there is no hope for the efficient  
progress of the order of industry while their natural leaders  
and exemplars depart from that propriety which alone is  
strength.

The necessity of enforcing this most practical part of  
rhetoric (the Rhetoric of Dispute), which is taught in no  
Mechanics, or Literary Institution, is evidenced in the dis-  
couraging fact that an impartial, impersonal, and dispassionate  
tone is almost fatal in newspaper and periodical literature.  
We address a populace to whom nothing that is just seems  
spirited. We must be offensively personal or we are pronounced  
tame. Unless we are rancorous we are not relished. The  
reason is that most men, when stung by a sense of injury, are  
naturally precipitated from extreme to extreme. Their opin-  
ions, when sincere, "are not produced by the ordinary law of  
intellectual births, by induction or inference, but are equivo-  
cally generated" by the heat of fervid emotion, wrought upon  
by some sense of unbearable oppression.

So it ever is with the intellectually undisciplined, of what-

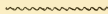
ever class—they believe all strength manifests itself in spasms, that Truth is a descendant from the Furies, that no man can be brave who does not bluster, nor have enthusiasm if he do not write in hysterics. But I quit this subject, repeating the fine language of one whom I have several times quoted:—

“Defect in manners is usually the defect of fine perceptions.

\* \* A beautiful behaviour is better than a beautiful form : it gives a higher pleasure than statues or pictures. It is the finest of the fine arts. \* \* The person who screams or uses the superlative degree, or converses with heat, puts whole drawing-rooms to flight. If you wish to be loved, love measure.

\* \* Coolness and absence of heat and haste indicate fine qualities. A gentleman makes no noise : a lady is serene.

\* \* Let us leave hurry to slaves. The compliments and ceremonies of our breeding should signify, however remotely, the grandeur of our destiny.”



## CHAPTER XXII.

### QUESTIONING.

THE Socratic method of disputation or artful questioning, (of which Zeno, the Eleatic, was the author,) by which an opponent is entrapped into concessions, and thus confuted, is rather fit for wranglers and sophists than reasoners. There is too much reason to believe that Socrates condescended to this course often at the expense of ingenuousness. It is said in his defence that *he* did it not as the sophists, for the sake of confounding virtue, but for the purer purpose of confounding dexterous vice. It is, however, beneath the dignity of a reasoner to *betray* his opponent into the truth.

Questioning, however, is an essential instrument. A high authority, Dr. Arnold, has put this in a useful light:—“An inquiring spirit is not a presumptuous one, but the very con-

trary. He whose whole recorded life was intended to be our perfect example, is described as gaining instruction in the Temple by hearing and asking questions—the one is almost useless without the other. We should ask questions of our books and of ourselves—what is its purpose—by what means it proceeds to effect that purpose—whether we fully understand the one—whether we go along with the other. Do the arguments satisfy us? do the descriptions convey lively and distinct images to us? do we understand all the allusions to persons or things? In short, does our mind act over again from the writer's guidance what his acted before? do we reason as he reasoned, conceive as he conceived, think and feel as he thought and felt? or if not, can we discern where and how far we do not, and can we tell why we do not?

Questioning has also a place in Rhetoric as well as in research. Frankly conducted, it is a mode of conviction without offence. To whatever an opponent urges, with which we do not agree, of course we have some objection. Put this objection incidentally, and ask it as a question what answer can be given to it? This is a good conversational mode of debate, where the improvement of an opponent, rather than a triumph over him, is the object. It is not showy, but it is searching.

In a similar way confidence may be acquired by diffident speakers. A novice conversationalist is shy of taking part in debating a topic, lest he should not be able to sustain himself. To such I have said, Put your argument in the form of an objection which some would urge, and beg some one of the company to tell you what he would say in reply. If to this answer you have an objection further, put that also in the querist form; for a man will be able to ask a question who would never be able to make a speech. By this easy means the most diffident may get into conversation, and when once excited will speak freely enough—perhaps too freely. A coward will fight when he grows warm in strife.

This method has another advantage. By this means a novice learns the best answers which the company can give to his own argument, and thus without risk of exposure he learns their weakness or finds out their strength. He has also taken the guage of his opponents' powers, and can, if he sees well, match himself against them.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### REPETITION.

THE Reformer who comprehends his mission attempts the discipline of the people in nobler views. Only great natures are heroic by instinct. But it is not more true that all men are eloquent sometimes than that all men are noble sometimes; but few continue so for want of the influence of suitable circumstances to nourish and sustain the feeling. Every man is great when he lays down Plutarch, but the feeling dies away in the contact with the lower life of cities. To remedy this the Reformer has recourse to reiteration.

In introducing a new topic to an auditory, a wise speaker repeats the same sentiment and argument in many different forms of expression, each in itself brief, but all together affording such an expansion of the sense to be conveyed, and detaining the mind upon it, as the case may require. Care must be taken that the repetition may not be too glaringly apparent; the variations must not consist in the mere use of other synonymous words, but what has been expressed in appropriate terms may be repeated in metaphorical; the antecedent or consequent of any argument, or the parts of an antithesis may be transposed, or several different points, that have been enumerated, presented in a varied order.

It is given to reiteration to accomplish that which is denied



to power. The reputation of Robespierre, now breaking a little through clouds of calumny, denser and darker than ever before obscured human name, is a striking illustration of the omnipotence of repetition. The most eloquent of its vindicators has thus sketched his triumph :—

“Still deeper in the shade, and behind the chief of the National Assembly, a man almost unknown began to move, agitated by uneasy thoughts, which seemed to forbid him to be silent and unmoved ; he spoke on all occasions, and attacked all speakers indifferently, including Mirabeau himself. Driven from the tribune, he ascended it next day ; overwhelmed with sarcasm, coughed down, disowned by all parties, lost amongst the eminent champions who fixed public attention, he was incessantly beaten, but never dispirited. It might have been said, that an inward and prophetic genius revealed to him the vanity of all talent, and the omnipotence of a firm will and unwearied patience, and that an inward voice said to him, ‘These men who despise thee are thine ; all the changes of this revolution, which now will not deign to look upon thee, will eventually terminate in thee, for thou hast placed thyself in the way like the inevitable excess, in which all impulse ends.’”

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### POETRY.

SUCH proverbs as “poets are born and not made” have encouraged the notion, that inspiration does everything for the poet, and art nothing ; whereas inspiration gives him the idea, and art enables him to express it. It is very probable that “creative” capacity is an element in the poetic nature which art does not make, but educates only. Yet experience teaches us that decided poetic power sometimes sinks into the common-

place, and that that which has been pronounced mediocre has been cultured into excellence. We, therefore, ought to pause before treating so disdainfully, as is the fashion, the humble versifiers who, from time to time, solicit the world's notice. Certainly Byron's "Hours of Idleness" were as weak a specimen of the poetic, as patrician or plebeian fancy ever concocted. It gave no sign of that fierce power which was afterwards evoked from the same pen. Both Burns and Elliott have been greatly indebted—perhaps as much indebted to art as to their ideas, for the distinction which attaches to their names. Many a name of note now, might be cited, whose infantile genius was rocked in the cradle of doggrel.

Between Rhyme and Poetry there is a great gulph, which patient study alone may bridge over. Some of the intermediate steps may be indicated. The gradations may be explained, which, though all may not be able to pass through, all may be able to understand, and determine their own position in reference to them.

A Sunderland candidate for Parnassian laurels lately presented the public with the following very A-B-C effort :—

Two gentlemen dined at my house,  
 For breakfast they had some ham;  
 Says I, "Are you going to Hartlepool?"  
 "Oh yes," says they, "we am."

Even the rudest kind of Verse should have some qualities not found in prose. What Poetry is it is not easy to define satisfactorily. But this is agreed upon, that whatever is called Poetry ought to contain an idea or ideas above the level of Prose, and such as cannot be so well expressed in Prose. Now ordinary Prose, if tolerable, is grammatical, but the verse above quoted has not this quality. In verse the corresponding terminations of lines should rhyme—this rule is also neglected. Corresponding lines should have the same number of syllables in them—that is, should have the same measure, the same quantity of accented and unaccented sounds : the versi-

fier we have cited seems innocent of any such requirement. Indeed, the majority of those who publish rhymes never have paid the least attention to these essential elements of verse. Many, indeed, have never heard that there are such elements. Most of the rejected "Poetry" sent to periodicals and newspapers is of this class; for persons who understand the mechanical part of poetry frequently know what they are about, know their own powers, and do not send out productions which have not some stamp of excellence upon them.

A young mind of any force or emulation commonly takes to the experiment of verse. The exercise should always be encouraged and criticised. In this way the new thinker may learn the power of words agreeably, and the nature of elevated ideas. He will consult Dictionaries of Synonyms. So much the better. The habit will increase his knowledge. He will keep what he acquires, because he will get it when he wants it. Turn his ambition to useful account. If you cannot make him a poet, you may make him a grammarian, a linguist, and a thinker, and save him from making himself ridiculous by teaching him the difference between Prose, Rhyme, Verse, and Poetry. Let it be understood that "all persons may rhyme, but that it is given only to few to compose thoughts—the first requisites of which are, that they be new, striking and beautiful, and for the expression of which it is further necessary that there be gifts and acquirements of language infinitely above those required for common purposes."\*

We may usefully trace the distinctions suggested a little further. Mere rhyme often assists the memory, and if nervous, it may better strike the understanding than prose. Of this quality are some old lines on Feasting and Fasting, beginning thus :—

Accustom early in your youth  
To lay embargo on your mouth;  
And let no rarities invite  
To pall and glut your appetite;

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\* "Chambers' Journal," No. 21, 1844.

But check it always, and give o'er  
 With a desire of eating more ;  
 For where one dies by *inanition*,  
 A thousand perish by *repletion*.\*

Old Dr. Johnson had not a fine ear, and he judged the artistic quality of poetry chiefly by the calculation of syllables. He was a poet himself, but was chiefly distinguished for his power of making verse. His knowledge of literary art and his manly sense have given an elevation to his productions which have won for them distinction, and which show how good sense will command respect where imagination is wanting. I quote his Prologue spoken by Garrick at the opening of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, because, as well as illustrating his powers, it illustrates the topics of this book :—

When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes  
 First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakspeare rose.  
 Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,  
 Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new :  
 Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,  
 And panting Time toiled after him in vain,  
 His powerful strokes presiding truth impress'd,  
 And unresisted passion storm'd the breast.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,  
 To please in method, and invent by rule ;  
 His studious patience and laborious art  
 By regular approach essay'd the heart.  
 Cold approbation gave the lingering bays,  
 For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise ;  
 A mortal born, he met the general doom,  
 But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,  
 Nor wish'd for Jonson's art, nor Shakspeare's flame,  
 Themselves they studied—as they felt, they writ—  
 Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.  
 Vice always found a sympathetic friend—  
 They pleased their age, and did not aim to mend ;  
 Yet bards like these aspired to lasting praise,  
 And proudly hoped to pimp in future days.

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\* E. Roynard, M. D., 1750.

Their cause was general, their supports were strong,  
 Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long;  
 Till shame regain'd the post that sense betray'd,  
 And virtue call'd oblivion to her aid.

Then, crush'd by rules, and weaken'd as refined,  
 For years the power of tragedy declined;  
 From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,  
 Till declamation roar'd whilst passion slept;  
 Yet still did virtue deign the stage to tread,  
 Philosophy remain'd though nature fled,  
 But forced, at length, her ancient reign to quit,  
 She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of wit;  
 Exulting folly hail'd the joyous day,  
 And pantomime and song confirmed her sway.

Hard is his lot that here by fortune placed,  
 Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;  
 With every meteor of caprice must play,  
 And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day.  
 Ah! let not censure term our fate our choice,  
 The stage but echoes back the public voice;  
 The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,  
 For we that live to please, must please to live.

Then prompt no more the follies you decry,  
 As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die;  
 'Tis yours this night to bid the reign commence  
 Of rescued nature, and reviving sense;  
 To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,  
 For useful mirth and salutary woe;  
 Bid scenic virtue form the rising age,  
 And truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

This prologue has wit, energy, and striking sense; but Johnson's want of fancy is more evident in his "Death of Charles the Twelfth," which has his perfect force, but at the close only rises into the poetical. The last two lines have the true genius of poetical inspiration:—

On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,  
 How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide;  
 A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,  
 No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;  
 O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,  
 Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;  
 No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,  
 War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field.

Behold surrounding kings their power combine,  
 And one capitulate, and one resign.  
 Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain.  
 "Think nothing gained," he cries, "till naught remain,  
 On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,  
 And all be'mine beneath the polar sky."  
 The march begins in military state,  
 And nations on his eye suspended wait.  
 Stern famine guards the solitary coast,  
 And winter barricades the realm of frost:  
 He comes—not want and cold his course delay—  
 Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day!  
 The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,  
 And shows his misery in distant lands,  
 Condemn'd a needy suppliant to wait,  
 While ladies interpose and slaves debate.  
 But did not chance at length her error mend?  
 Did no subverted empire mark his end?  
 Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?  
 Did hostile millions press him to the ground  
 His fall was destined to a barren strand,  
 A petty fortress and a dubious hand,  
*He left a name at which the world grew pale,  
 To point a moral, or adorn a tale.*

Johnson was a mechanical poet. Allan Cunningham, speaking of Chevy Chase, a genuine poem, which Sir Philip Sidney said fell on his ears like the sound of a trumpet, suggests to us the highest elements of poetry. "'Chevy Chase' and 'Sir Andrew Barton,' are history and truth: but history excited, elevated, and inspired: truth all life, spirit, and heroism." "Poetry," says Gilfillan, is "thought on fire." It is in its impassioned truth that we feel its presence; it is for the beauty of ideas, distinct from the beauty of things, that we admire it.

Personification is the soul of poetry. In few of our modern writers is this quality more remarkable than in Douglas Jerrold, whose writings are characterised by the omnipresence of personification. Bulwer presents more of the appearance of personification in his writings: but Jerrold more of the reality. Bulwer's personifications seem often to be artificial, and suggested by capital letters, while Jerrold's are presented in deep-set finished pictures. Many are the attributes of poetry,

but its grandest power is personification. *It* peoples the world of fancy and thought with new forms. It individualises sentiments—it adds to our intellectual acquaintances. How dim and indefinite are our impressions of the past ! but in the hands of Bryant what a majestic entity it becomes, in that poem beginning—

Thou unrelenting Past !  
Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain,  
And fetters sure and fast  
Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.

What a splendid ideality is in this poem realised ! What multitudinous forms are bodied forth ! It is like the revelation of eternity, and the mind trembles and thrills as on the verge of a new world.

Poetry is found in various states—sometimes in the invocation of historic names, in allusions, in illustrations, in similes—sometimes in intensity of language, and sometimes in intensity of feeling.

Poetry is often found independent of the verse it forms, as gems are found unset. “We would define poetry to be that mode of expression by which intensity of feeling on any subject is conveyed from one mind to another. Of course, the more just, the more striking, the mode of expression, the more complete and rapid will be the communication ; hence—and still more, because many persons have not courage to dive beneath a rough surface—it is desirable that the poet should be able to clothe his thoughts in mellifluous language. But words are not poetry. Witness the beautiful idea of Professor Heeren—“Persepolis, rising above the deluge of years.” This, being a translated passage, is not dependent upon phraseology for its beauty. But who does not feel its exquisiteness, picturing at once the almost miraculous stability of those thread-like columns which the intemperate policy of Alexander failed to overthrow, and the vague, shapeless uncertainty which

clouds the period to which their erection is attributed? The whole passage forms a most poetically drawn picture.

“Again :—‘Time sadly overcometh all things, and is now dominant, and sitteth upon a sphinx, and looketh unto Memphis and old Thebes ; while his sister, Oblivion, reclineth semi-somnous on a pyramid, gloriously triumphing, making puzzles of Titanian erections, and turning old glories into dreams. History sinketh beneath her cloud. The traveller, as he paceth amazedly through those deserts, asketh of her, Who builded them? and she mumbleth something, but what it is he knoweth not.’

“Is not this poetry? and yet how quaint, almost inharmonious is its structure. Compare it with the famous simile in Pope’s Homer, beginning—

Thus, when the moon, refulgent lamp of night.

Will this passage, replete with the most gorgeous epithets, and clothed in the most harmonious verse, bear a comparison with the strangely-apparelled poetry of Sir Thomas Browne? It is not our ear which prompts the verdict—it is our innate feeling of truth and beauty. If thus poetic genius can exist independent and despite of phraseology, may we not suppose it to be given (we do not say in a high degree) to multitudes of those whom the world would never accuse of being poets? Our daily experience confirms this. We have heard a servant describe scenery with a beauty of feeling and an imagery which was true poetry ; and we hear a child talk poetry to her doll. Facility of illustration is an attribute of poetic genius we have met with in a labourer.”\*

An instance of the highest form of poetry is Blanco White’s great Sonnet to Night, which is perhaps the distinctest addition to human speculation which the genius of the thinker has ever made. It happens, also, to be one of the most accom-

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\* “Sharpe’s Magazine,” No. 25, 1846.



plished efforts of Elocution to deliver it well. It requires great and varied power, and the last line is remarkable for the distinctness of enunciation required :—

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew  
 Thee from report divine, had heard thy name,  
 Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,  
 This glorious canopy of light and blue?  
 Yet, 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,  
 Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
 Hesperus with the host of heaven came,  
 And lo! creation widened in man's view.  
 Who could have thought such darkness lay conceal'd  
 Within thy beams, O Sun? or who could find,  
 Whilst fruit, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,  
 That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?  
 Why do we, then, shun *death*, with anxious strife?  
 If Light conceals so much—wherefore not Life?

The previous discovery of Truth is implied by Rhetoric, which is the art of communicating Truth; and of all the forms of the enforcement of Truth, Poetry is the highest. All the powers of language, all the graces of literature, all the resources of genius, and nature, and feeling, are employed to illustrate that splendour of expression, that harmony of thought, which, wedded to harmony of time and sound, men call Poesy.

THE END.

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“LOGIC OF FACTS,” OR PLAIN HINTS ON REASONING, by G. J. Holyoake, is published in uniform style with this work.

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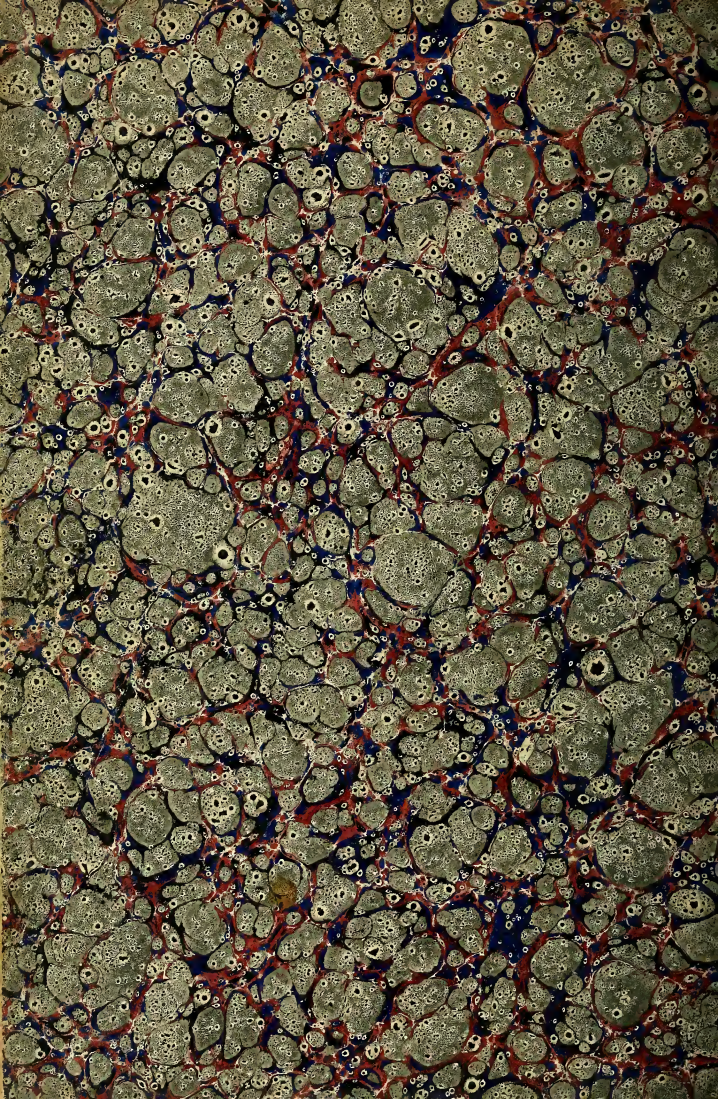




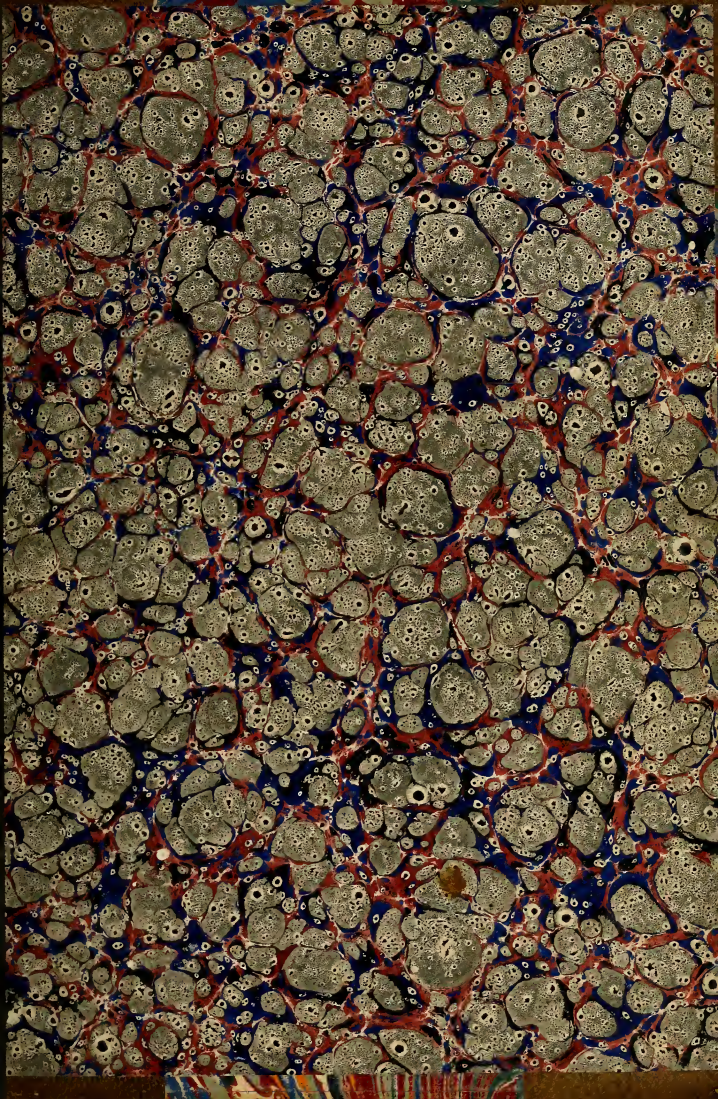












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